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# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No. I.

PUNISHMENT

OF

*THE MAROONS OF DEMARARA.*

FROM

PINCKARD'S NOTES ON THE WEST INDIES.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY ELLERTON AND HENDERSON,

JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

1816.

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# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

A SECOND edition of Dr. *Pinckard's Notes on the West Indies* has recently made its appearance. No publication could be more seasonable. It exhibits the impression made on the mind of an intelligent and disinterested spectator, at first evidently prejudiced in favour of West-Indian manners, who has had an opportunity of seeing with his own eyes the real nature and effects of colonial bondage. It seems the more necessary to bring forward to the view of the public, at this particular time, a witness so respectable, and so far removed from any suspicion of partiality or party feeling, as Dr. Pinckard; since, in the warmth of the conflict on West-Indian subjects which is now carrying on, the colonial partizans appear disposed to deny the existence even of the most prominent features of their own system; for example, the practice of *driving*. We should as soon have expected to hear it denied that a nose formed a part of the human countenance, as that the practice of *driving* the Negroes at their work by the impulse of the cart-whip, was not generally prevalent in the West Indies. Exceptions from this common rule may doubtless be produced—so may men without noses: but from such rare examples it would be most obviously unfair to object to the general statement. The fact is—a fact capable of the clearest proof from the direct evidence, or the unavoidable concessions, of West-Indians themselves—that the Negroes in general labour under the lash, and are compelled to exertion either by the terror or the actual pain of its infliction. On some future occasion, should it be necessary, a variety of authentic attestations to this fact will be presented to the public view. In the mean time, the testimony of Dr. Pinckard may be regarded as quite decisive. Drivers, of whom there are one or more on all estates, this interesting writer describes to be "Slaves so termed from being promoted to the distinguished office of following their comrades *upon all occasions with a whip at their backs, as an English carter follows his horses.*" In short, it would be as reasonable to deny that slavery exists in the West Indies at all, as to deny that the slaves are compelled to labour by the impulse of the whip.

The object of the present paper, however, is not to enter on the discussion of this particular question, but to present the public with one of those graphic representations of West-Indian manners and feelings, in respect to the slave population, with which Dr. Pinckard's work has furnished us, and which relates not to the conduct of an individual, but to the administration of criminal justice, and the judicial proceedings of public functionaries. The letter from which the extract is taken bears date in Demarara, the 16th May, 1796.

"I wish I could repeat to you," observes Dr. Pinckard, "as eloquently as I heard it related, the very interesting detail of an expedition sent into the woods against the Bush-negroes, last year, under the command of Major M'Grah and Captain Dougan. Many persons had been robbed, and had their property otherwise injured by their predatory excursions: indeed the whole colony

was disturbed, and, from the increasing number of these sanguinary hordes, was threatened with eventual destruction. It was resolved, therefore, that a body of troops should be sent into the woods to search for their places of resort, and to endeavour to subdue or exterminate them. A party of the Dutch soldiers of the garrison was accordingly equipped for this duty, and marched in due military order into the forest.

"But this was not the species of force calculated for such an enterprise: from not having observed all the minute precautions required in this new and hazardous warfare, they were surprised and defeated by the Blacks; and very few of the soldiers escaped, most of them being killed, and their scalps, or bodies, fixed against the trees, to serve as examples of what others were to expect who should venture on a similar service.

"The government and the colonists, having discovered, from fatal experience, that the Bush-negroes were more formidable than had been imagined; and finding that regular European troops were not the best fitted for this kind of duty, raised a corps of Blacks from among the most faithful of the slaves, and also engaged in their interest a party of Indians from the woods, who, happily for the planters, hold the Bush-negroes in great abhorrence.

"Well provided and equipped, this second expedition, commanded as above-mentioned, separated into two parties, and boldly advanced into the forest to form a combined attack. Upon their march, they passed the dead bodies of the Dutch soldiers, tied to the trees at the sides of a narrow path. Not deterred by this horrid scene, they proceeded onward, having the sagacious Indians on their flanks; by whose acuteness and penetration they discovered the various situations where the different companies of the brigands had taken up their residence, and, by well-concerted attacks, defeated and routed them wheresoever they met them. *As an encouragement to the able and new-raised troops, a premium was offered for every right hand of a Bush-negro that should be brought in; and, when they returned from the woods, they appeared with seventy black arms displayed upon the points of their bayonets, causing a very singular and shocking spectacle to the beholders. Three hundred guilders each had been fixed as the price; but it was found necessary to reduce the premium, lest the slaves should kill their prisoners, or even destroy each other to obtain it.*

"The exertion and fatigue required in such a movement cannot well be conceived by those who are accustomed only to regular and systematic warfare: nor is it probable that such a service could have been supported in this climate by European soldiers. In addition to all the difficulties of making their way through the unknown and almost impenetrable woods, they knew not where to find the enemy's posts; and were, at every minute, liable to be fallen upon by surprise.

"At first entering the bush, the march was continued for a great distance, nearly knee-deep in water: when further advanced, the troops had to scramble through the thickets, or follow each other, by a confined path, in Indian file; and, after the harassing march of the day, to lie down at night, on the bare ground, under the trees, the officers suspending their hammocks from bough to bough in the open air. They had, moreover, to carry the whole of their provisions, arms, ammunition, and every other necessary required for the success of the enterprise, upon their backs.

"But for the assistance given by the Indians, the brigands would, probably, never have been subdued; perhaps not found! The expertness of these men, in such

a pursuit, is peculiar, and beyond all that could be imagined, by those who live in crowded society. They not only hear sounds in the woods, which are imperceptible to others, but judge, with surprising accuracy, of the distance and direction from whence they proceed. The position of a fallen leaf, or the bending of a bramble, too slight to be noticed by an European eye, conveys to them certain intelligence respecting the route taken by those whom they pursue. From constant practice and observation, their organs of sense become highly improved; and they hear with an acuteness, and see with a precision, truly surprising to those who are unacquainted with their habits and their vigilance. With such guides, the corps moved in confidence, and was conducted with safety. Seven encampments of the brigands were discovered, and completely routed; some of which had existed during fifteen years, concealed in the profoundest gloom of the forest.

"The following was the mode usually observed in establishing these places of residence and resort. Having fixed upon the spot most convenient for their purpose, a circular piece of ground was cleared of its wood: in the centre of this, they built huts, and formed the encampment, planting around the buildings, oranges, bananas, plantains, yams, eddoes, and other kinds of provisions; thus, in addition to the trees of the forest, procuring themselves further concealment by the plantations which gave them food. The eddoes were found in great plenty, and seemed to constitute their principal diet. Round the exterior of the circular spot was cut a deep and wide ditch, which, being filled with water, and stuck, at the sides and bottom, with sharp-pointed stakes, served as a formidable barrier of defence. The path across this ditch was placed two or three feet below the surface, and wholly concealed from the eye by the water being always thick and muddy. Leaves were strewed, and steppings, similar in their kind, made to the edges of the ditch, at various parts, as a precaution, to deceive any who might approach, respecting the real situation of the path. But the proper place of crossing was found out by the sagacity of the Indians, who soon discovered that to attempt to pass at any other part was to be impaled alive.

"It was found that the brigands had eight of these encampments, or points of rendezvous, in the woods, one of which is supposed still to remain undiscovered. After much fatigue in endeavouring to find it, the search was relinquished, in the idea that some of the prisoners, either by indulgence *or torture*, would be induced to make it known: but this expectation has only led to disappointment. All the means used have failed; and the prisoners, *faithful to their cause, have suffered torture and death without betraying their forest-associates.*

"*The cruel severities inflicted upon these miserable Blacks have been such as you will scarcely believe could have been practised by any well-ordered government:* for, however strongly punishment was merited, *the refinement of torture, with which it was employed, ought never to have been tolerated in any state professing to be civilized. Humanity shudders at the bare recital of it.*

"Most of the ringleaders were taken, and brought to Stabroek, where they were afterwards tried and executed; the majority of them suffering with a degree of fortitude and heroism worthy a better cause. One in particular, named Amsterdam, supported the extreme of punishment with a firmness truly astonishing. He was subjected to the most shocking torture, in the hope of compelling him to give information regarding the remaining encampment—but in vain! He despised the severest suffering, and

nothing could induce him to betray his late companions, or to make known their yet undiscovered retreat*.

"*He was sentenced to be burnt alive, first having his flesh torn from his limbs with red-hot pincers; and in order to render his punishment still more terrible, he was compelled to sit by, and see thirteen others broken upon the wheel and hung; and then, in being conducted to execution, was made to walk over the thirteen dead bodies of his comrades.* Being fastened to an iron stake, surrounded with the consuming pile, which was about to be illumined, he regarded the by-standers with all the complacency of heroic fortitude, and, exhibiting the most unyielding courage, resolved that all the torture ingenuity or cruelty might invent should not extort from him a single groan, or a syllable that could in any way impeach his friends.

"With the first pair of pincers, the executioner tore the flesh from one of his arms. The sudden infliction of pain caused him to recede, in a slight degree, from the irons; and he drew in his breath, as if to form it into a sigh, but he instantly recovered himself. His countenance indicated self-reproach, and he manifestly took shame for having betrayed even the slightest sense of suffering; then, resuming more, if possible, than his former composure, he patiently waited the approach of the next irons, and, on these being brought towards him, he steadfastly cast his eye upon them, inclined a little forward, and with an unshaken firmness of countenance, deliberately met their burning grasp! From that moment he shewed himself capable of despising the severest pain. Not a feature was afterwards disturbed, and he preserved a degree of tranquillity implying absolute contempt of torture and of death.

"Finally, when the destructive pile was set in flames, his body spun round the iron stake, with the mouth open, until his head fell back, and life was extinguished. I am told, by a gentleman who had the melancholy task to attend the execution, that the most horrid stench continued for many hours, to issue from the roasting body, and was extremely offensive throughout the town, penetrating so strongly into the houses to leeward, as to make many persons sick, and prevent them from taking food during the remainder of the day."

Well may humanity shudder at such a recital. But if the transaction be too horrid even to be told, what must it have been to be witnessed—and still more, to be felt? And is it in the *uncontrouled* power of persons capable of perpetrating such atrocities, that the British Parliament and Nation will be content to leave the destinies of so many of their fellow-subjects? We must no longer squeamishly turn aside our view from these spectacles of horror. This nation can no longer decline the duty of examining them, aye, and of remedying them too.

But we shall be told, that twenty years have passed since these scenes were acted; and that the state of the Slaves in the West Indies has been greatly improved during the interval. Be it so. But to what is this improvement, even if we admit that it has taken place, to be attributed but to the controul of public opinion in this country, and to the influence of those public discussions which West Indians would deprecate as the worst of evils?

But may there not be some room to question whether the temper and feelings of the White population of the West Indies towards the Slaves have undergone any marked change? The doubt refers not to enlightened proprietors residing in this coun-

* Such readers, as have not nerves capable of enduring a tale of horror, will do well to proceed no farther in the narration.

try; nor to various cases of men of enlarged minds and liberal education residing in the colonies; but to the body of resident Whites. The recent transactions in Barbadoes, it must be allowed, for example, do not furnish any striking proof of the alleged improvement. Only two White men at most, more recent accounts state only one, fell during the commotion; and it is even now doubted whether that single death is to be ascribed to the insurgent Blacks. But what has been the course pursued by the Whites? Numbers of *unresisting* Slaves, it is admitted, have been killed by the militia. Numbers besides have since been executed on the scaffold; and the thirst for Negro blood, it appears from good authority, is not yet satiated. A thousand executions are said to have taken place in the course of a few weeks. We should like to read the minutes of the trials which have issued in this summary and tremendous ACT OF JUSTICE. Why, if in this kingdom, containing twelve millions of people, rebellion had threatened the life of our monarch, and the overthrow of his government by open war, what should we have said to *a thousand executions?* And yet in the petty island of Barbadoes, containing not a hundred-and-fiftieth part of that population, a thousand human beings have been judicially executed in the course of a few weeks*.

* Lest this statement should be suspected of exaggeration, it may be proper to insert the following extracts of letters from Barbadoes, dated May 16, 1816. "Martial law is still in force. The militia are much harassed by the constant and vigilant guard they are forced to keep, and by their frequent march about the country in search of the insurgents, and in escorting those who are to be hung to their different places of execution on their owners' plantations. The great number of prisoners on board the prison-ships require a perpetual guard." "About 1,000 of the insurgents have already lost their lives. The slaves shew much sulkiness who remain quiet and keep at their work." "Numbers of Negroes have been shot and otherwise destroyed, and a great many more remain to be executed. They were brought in by dozens every day."

How is this statement to be reconciled with what was announced by the highest authority; namely, that the insurrection had been entirely suppressed within a few days after it had broken out? And where is this work of death to stop?—While it is proceeding, too, the Barbadians seem to make it a crime that the quiet and peaceable part of the slave population should shew "sulkiness." What is it to *shew* sulkiness? To look grave and dejected? And is it in human nature to look otherwise, while executions, perhaps of friends and relations, are the regular order of the day; while farther arrests are daily multiplied (dozens every day); while the persons who so look know not but a similar fate awaits themselves; while the island presents one great Aceldama, and even the militia of Barbadoes are fatigued with their bloody labour? Would the Barbadians have their Slaves to look gay under such circumstances?

Demarara, the very scene of the enormities related by Dr. Pinckard, will furnish another example. There one of the criminal judges, J. Clayton Jenyns, no longer ago than in November 1815, published in the gazette of that colony, a letter addressed to the United Society of Merchants and Planters, containing, among many other things equally outrageous, the following sentiments:—"I will venture to state it as my humble opinion, that the authority of the master over his Negroes, it being constantly employed on minute details, and being in its nature prompt and of hourly application, is not to be encumbered with official formalities. The *sudden* exercise of it is indispensably necessary to keep them to obedience and their duty." "It is a power to be exercised by the proprietors as *sole* chief and magistrate." "It would become entirely impracticable to check and to restrain the disorders which would ripen into serious evils if

the masters were not armed with a powerful coercive force *suddenly to apply the remedy. His power cannot without danger be brought into doubt or discussion: it should never be opposed or thwarted by any intermediate authority.*" Mr. Jenyns goes on to deprecate, in the strongest terms, the interference of public functionaries, and intimates that the *honour* of the planters is a sufficient security for the well-being of the Slaves.

And who is it that thus writes? The Fiscal, the criminal judge of the colony; the very man to whom the protection of the Slaves from domestic oppression is officially committed by his Majesty. But if the criminal judge himself, the official guardian of the Slaves, shall dare, openly and in the hearing of the community at large, thus to express his sentiments; what may we reasonably expect to be the views and feelings of the mass of those whom he addresses? And shall we wonder if the Slaves of Demarara, thus avowedly abandoned by their only legal protector, to the "tender mercies" of those who could tolerate the scenes described by Dr. Pinckard, should be goaded to insubordination and revolt? And is not this a case for the anxious consideration of the British Parliament and the British Public? Shall we be guiltless of the blood that may hereafter be shed, if we be deterred by interested clamour from due investigation, and from the exercise of an adequate controul?

FINIS.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No II.

## STATE OF THE SLAVE POPULATION

ILLUSTRATED BY

## A VIEW OF CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS

IN

## *THE ISLAND OF NEVIS.*

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY ELLERTON AND HENDERSON,

JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

1816.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

THERE is something extremely revolting to British, and still more to Christian, feelings in the parliamentary recognition of a state of slavery, unless it be for the purpose of mitigating its harshness. Jealous as this nation has always been on the subject of personal liberty, it is not easy to account for the worse than apathy with which it has regarded the open and undisguised oppression of hundreds of thousands of our fellow-subjects, who are shut out not only from all participation in British rights, but are destitute even of the *shadow* of legal protection, except in what regards life or limb. It is a system which stands preeminent in cruelty and injustice; for notwithstanding the late attempt of the Assembly of Jamaica, to rebut this charge, it may safely be affirmed that there is no condition of slavery now existing on the face of the globe, and that there never has existed a state of slavery, not even among the Romans, whose slave code was by far the most rigorous of any, which may not be called mild in comparison with the slavery of our West-Indian Colonies. And yet this slavery, known to be thus inhuman and oppressive, continues to be recognized, even by a British Parliament, without any *direct* steps being taken for the alleviation of its miseries. It is indeed most strange that such a monstrous anomaly as this should ever have existed among a people calling themselves Christian. It will be stranger still, if, after its true nature has been fully and accurately ascertained, it shall continue to exist, without some effort to mitigate its evils. —Let us contemplate for a moment the state of a slave in the British West Indies. He is, in the first place, the absolute property of his master, and may be sold by him at pleasure, precisely in the same manner in which he may sell a horse or a mule. Nor is the master bound, in making such a transfer of a fellow-creature, to consider for one moment, either the character of the individual to whom he conveys by the deed of sale his right of property, nor the ties of husband, father, wife, or child, which may be suddenly and eternally broken by the transfer. In the eye of *colonial* law, the negro slave is a *thing*, not a person. He has absolutely no political existence, nor any civil rights. He can neither sue nor be sued. The testimony of ten thousand slaves witnessing a murder would avail nothing against a person of free condition. Not only would not a free person be convicted on such testimony, but such testimony would not even be received. Laws, it is true, have lately been passed in most of the colonies which make the murder of a slave a capital felony, and which prohibit, under certain pecuniary penalties, the maiming or the immoderate corporal punishment of slaves. But these laws, forced from the colonial assemblies by a desire to avert any direct interference of the mother country in their interior legislation, after having answered the purposes of delusion, have been allowed, for the most part, to sleep. It is, indeed, vain to expect that laws will be efficient which are opposed to the feelings and prejudices of almost the whole community, by whom, in the capacity of magistrates and jurors they are to be executed.—Laws have also been passed for regulating the food, clothing, hours

of labour, and religious instruction of the slaves. But it is admitted, that these laws were never intended to be operative; and that under the existing system, it is impossible they should. The answer of Governor Prevost, of Dominica, to an inquiry of the Secretary of State (Earl Camden) on this subject, is fully applicable. "The act of the legislature of Dominica," observes the Governor, in a letter dated Jan. 17, 1805, "entituled 'An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and Government of Slaves,' *appears to have been considered from the day it was passed until this hour*," (it had then been in force about eight or ten years), "*as a political measure, to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of slaves.*" "Having said this, your Lordship will not be surprised," he adds, "to learn that the bill has been wholly neglected."

To the same effect is the Report of the late Sir William Young, to the Secretary of State, dated Oct. 6, 1811. This gentleman, it is well known, was for many years an able and determined opponent in Parliament of the abolition of the slave trade. Soon after that measure was carried, he was appointed Governor of Tobago. After a residence of four years in that island, he thus writes:— "I think the slaves have from *law no protection*. In this, and I doubt not in every other, island, there are laws for the protection of slaves, and good ones; but circumstances in the administration of whatever law render it a dead letter. When the intervention of the law is most required, it will have the least effect; as in cases where a vindictive and cruel master has care to commit the most atrocious cruelties, *even to murder of his slaves*, no free person being present to witness the act. There appears to me a radical defect in the administration of justice throughout the West Indies, in whatever case the wrongs done to a slave are under consideration; or rather, that justice cannot in truth be administered, controuled as it is by a law of evidence which covers the most guilty European with impunity, provided that when having a criminal intent he is cautious not to commit the crime in the presence of a free witness. On small plantations there is often but one free person, the resident manager, and no slave can appear against him. In the back yard of the jobber of a small gang for hire, in the workshop or out-buildings of each artizan or petty tradesman, and within every house, the greatest cruelties on a slave may be exercised without a possibility of conviction," &c. &c.—See Papers of House of Commons, ordered to be printed July 12, 1815.

Even Mr. Wilberforce could not have exhibited a more unfavourable picture of the condition of the West-Indian Slave, than is here done by Sir William Young, himself a West-Indian planter and long zealously opposed to the abolition.

If further proof were wanting that the *meliorating* laws of the West Indies, as they have been called, are little more than a dead letter, it might be furnished in abundance. It will be sufficient at present to produce, in illustration of this position, the following authentic statement; which in the month of August, 1810, was laid before Lord Liverpool, by him transmitted to Governor Elliot, and fully admitted by that gentleman to be correct.

"*Case of the King* v. *Edward Huggins, sen. Esq.*

"The defendant, Edward Huggins, sen. Esq. is an eminent planter in the island of Nevis; has been peculiarly successful of late years, while other planters have in general had very opposite fortune; and has in consequence, been extending his possessions progressively, by new purchases of estates and slaves; so that at present he is said to own above six hundred Negroes*.

* The number has since been greatly increased by fresh purchases.

"Unfortunately, he is an instance of the frequent, though short-lived, success that attends a rigid exaction from the slaves, by means of severe discipline, of more than ordinary labour. Among other abuses, of which, during the Abolition-controversy, the existence was denied in Parliament, this gentleman has practised that of compelling his unfortunate slaves to perform night-work in the field, when the moonlight makes it practicable; and the kind of labour in which on those occasions they are employed, is that of carrying out dung from the home-stall to the fields, in wicker baskets, on their heads."—[See a description of this work in the Parliamentary Evidence on the Slave Trade; especially that of Sir Ashton Byam, attorney-general of Grenada, a witness called on the part of the anti-abolitionists.]

"Night-work (except in crop time, for the purpose of more speedily cutting and grinding the canes) is prohibited by a recent law of the islands composing the Leeward Island government. A General Council and Assembly of those islands were convened at St. Kitt's in 1798, in consequence of the earnest applications of his Majesty's Government (pursuant to a parliamentary address) to the colonial governors and legislatures, to obtain laws for the protection of slaves and the melioration of their state; and an act was passed for those purposes, by the tenth section of which it is enacted, that the slaves shall not be turned out to work before five o' clock in the morning, nor after seven in the evening, except in crop time, or from some evident necessity, under the penalty of five pounds.

"Whether Mr. Huggins's slaves had heard of this law, or whether the repugnance of injured nature to his oppressions produced involuntary opposition, is not known; but so it was, that some desertions, or some appearances of insubordination, were asserted to have been produced by the illegal exaction of night-work in carrying out dung. No insurrection, nor any forcible resistance of the master's authority, was proved, or even pretended, on the part of Mr. Huggins; and had such crimes been committed, the civil magistrate in the West Indies is always ready enough to punish them; nor is the bringing slaves to judicial punishment attended with any trouble, expense, or delay. Mr. Huggins had therefore no excuse for taking the law into his own hands, if the offence had been of a public kind. But it is understood to have amounted to no more than the private fault of non-obedience to unlawful commands of the master or his agents, or, at most, to desertion from the estate.

"This gentleman, however, was resolved on a vengeance, not only extra-judicial, but such as no magistrate, even in cases of the most heinous public offences, is empowered by law to inflict.

"Here it is necessary to say something of the mode of corporal punishment to which Mr. Huggins had resort, and its limitation by the colonial law.

"The ordinary punishment of slaves, is a whipping with the cart-whip, or, as it is called in Jamaica, the Cattle Whip, because it is the same which the drivers of carts or waggons in the West Indies apply to their mules or other cattle when working in a team. The same instrument coerces the labour of slaves in the field; but when applied as a punishment for past faults and in a solemn way, its inflictions are much more severe. The slave, instead of receiving a lash or two horizontally, or obliquely, over his jacket, shirt, or trowsers (which, nevertheless, is sufficiently painful), is laid down on the ground, his arms and legs being extended, and generally held down, and his body laid bare from the back downwards. The lash is then applied vertically, by the driver or executioner, who stands at the proper distance to make the sufferer

feel the full power of his torturing instrument. The report of the lash is louder than that of the long whalebone whips of our London carmen; and its effect so severe (except when the drivers are humanely forbid *to cut*, as the phrase is), that blood is drawn, and the skin stripped off, by every lash; till at length, if they are numerous, the poor victim's flesh, from the small of the back or hips down to the middle of the thigh, is not only excoriated, but cruelly mangled and torn. Such deep incisions are often made, that the parts, after they are healed, retain a shocking appearance during the rest of life.

"From this account of the punishment, it will not seem strange that the number of lashes has been limited, by general practice as well as by law, to a number less than forty. In most of the penal slave laws of the colonies, there is no medium in the scale of punishments, when inflicted by judgment of law, between thirty-nine lashes of the cart-whip, and mutilation, banishment, or death; and ten or twelve lashes are in general held an adequate punishment for common domestic offences—at least by merciful masters. The meliorating acts, as they are called, for the protection of slaves, have in this respect attempted, or affected to controul the master's authority; and the acts of the Leeward Islands already referred to, in the fourteenth section, has enacted, That if any person shall "cruelly whip" his slave, he shall be liable to an indictment in the superior court of criminal jurisdiction of the island, and, on conviction, shall be punished by fine or imprisonment, or both, at the discretion of the court. The slave, so cruelly whipped, is also, if it be thought necessary for his protection, to be sold to another master.

"After these explanations, the nature of Mr. Huggins's conduct will be better understood.

"Not content with gratifying his vengeance by punishment within the bounds of his plantation, where he might have laughed at public justice, by suffering none but slaves to witness his oppressions; he was resolved to shew his contempt of the law, and of the feelings of his more humane fellow-colonists, by making the public market-place of Charles-town, which is the seat of the insular courts and government, the theatre of a dreadful execution upon his unfortunate slaves.

"Accordingly, on the 23d of January 1810, he went, attended by two of his sons, on horseback, with upwards of twenty of his devoted victims, men and women, in custody of the drivers, through the streets of Charles-town, to the market-place; and there proceeded to indulge his cruelty to the utmost, during more than two hours, in the face of day, and in the sight and hearing, not only of free persons but magistrates, who offered him no interruption.

"To one negro man he gave, by the hands of expert drivers, no less than three hundred and sixty-five lashes; to another one hundred and fifteen; to a third, one hundred and sixty-five; to a fourth, two hundred and fifty-two; to a fifth, two hundred and twelve; to a sixth, one hundred and eighty-one; to a seventh, one hundred and eighty seven;—to a woman, one hundred and ten; to another, fifty-eight; to a third woman, ninety-seven; to a fourth, two hundred and twelve; to a fifth, two hundred and ninety-one; to a sixth, eighty-three; to another eighty-nine;—and to various other women and men, various other cruel measures of the same punishment.

"The poor sufferers were, of course, dreadfully cut and mangled; but they were conveyed to the plantation of their savage master, and attended by his surgeon, who, at his request, had been present at the execution, and who, though a justice of peace, had not interfered, as such, to prevent or forbid the crime. By his evidence,

at the trial which afterwards took place, it would appear that none of them died, though he admitted that many of them had suffered severely from fevers, the effects of their punishment. But by a subsequent account from the island, it appeared that one of the women, who was the most severely whipped, has died since the trial, or has since been discovered to be dead. Either this, or some other female sufferer, cried out during the whipping, that she was with child, but was disregarded, and her punishment went on. Among the circumstances of cruelty which have been mentioned, one of the drivers was brother to one of the men whom he was compelled to lacerate in the presence of the unfeeling master.

" At the time of this outrage on humanity, public decency, and law, no less than seven magistrates were in Charles-town. Two of them, the Rev. William Green, who holds two livings in the island, and is a justice of the peace, and the Rev. Samuel Lyons, who also holds two livings there, and is a member of the council, were within bearing of the lash, and must have known of the cruel and illegal cause, yet did not at all interpose. The same has been already remarked of the surgeon, Dr. Cassin. He admitted, at one of the trials which took place, that he was sent for by Mr. Huggins to attend in his professional character, and that having counted two hundred and thirty-six lashes given to one of the Negroes, he said he thought it was enough : but Mr. Huggins replied, he did not want his advice, unless he thought the man could bear no more; on which he, the witness, retired. Another justice of the peace, Mr. Edward Huggins, jun. was seen looking on at the execution the greatest part of the time.

" But though some of the magistracy of the island were thus negligent of their duty, and appeared to regard the meliorating act, as all such acts, it is to be feared, are regarded in every island which has passed them, viz. as laws never meant to be obeyed; the House of Assembly at Nevis, to its honour, considered this transaction as one that they were bound in humanity, and from regard to the credit of the colony, publicly to reprobate, and to make the subject of legal investigation. On the 31st of January, 1810, eight days after the fact, they came to a resolution to that effect, which they ordered to be printed, and to be transmitted to England, and circulated throughout all the islands, together with the evidence laid before them as to the facts of the case.

" The Council concurred in this resolution, except as to the printing and publishing the minutes; but they had been published, previously to this opinion of the Council in the Gazette of St. Christopher, by order of the House of Assembly.

" It should here be observed, that as there is no newspaper at Nevis, the Gazette of St. Christopher is the common organ of all official publications by the Government of Nevis.

" Perhaps to publish the evidence at all in that stage of the proceeding was premature; but the Assembly seems to have thought that the audacious publicity and notoriety of the act demanded from them a public reprobation of it, lest it should redound to their own disgrace, and be a subject of scandal in Europe. Whatever credit, however, the resolution may reflect on the individuals who passed it, the event has too well proved that the society in general does not deserve to share in it.

" An indictment was preferred, and found against Mr. Huggins, on the Act of the Leeward Islands before referred to; and early in May, 1810, it came on to be tried in the Court of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Nevis, when the facts, as here stated, were fully proved; and indeed not disputed on the part of the defendant. He

contented himself with attempting to prove that the slaves had been disorderly; but nothing like forcible resistance to the master's authority, or even mutinous or disrespectful language to him, or to any White person, was proved against them by any of his witnesses. The whole offence brought home to them was, their absenting themselves from the estate at night, to avoid carrying out dung by moonlight; and even in this offence some of the sufferers were not implicated. One of them had only neglected his duty as a watchman.

"It may seem strange, after reading the act on which the indictment was founded, that any evidence of this kind should be received, since no offence on the part of the slaves could justify the cruel conduct of the master. But it will be thought still stranger, perhaps, that the defendant's counsel should argue to the *jury against their obligation to respect the act itself, speaking of it in the most contemptuous way, and intimating that it was passed merely to satisfy the clamours of some individuals in England, whom it was necessary to appease.* Such, however, appears to have been the nature of the defence; and the defence was effectual. Mr. Huggins, after a short deliberation by the jury, was acquitted!!!

"It may be thought that at least the offender will in future be discountenanced by the more respectable members of the society. On the contrary, a party was making in his favour, to turn his opponents out of the Assembly, and place in their stead a majority who may expunge the resolution recorded against him: and, by the last accounts, two of his sons were just returned*. The President of the Council, being his son-in-law, is the less inexcusable for taking an active part on his behalf; and the influence of his own property and possessions in that small island is very considerable. But in the West Indies a master, prosecuted for the abuse of his power over his slaves, is always sure to find zealous partizans in abundance, among the many who are conscious that the case may be their own.

"Mr. Huggins is so well aware of this, that he has not been content to stand on the defensive. He has prosecuted, in St. Christopher, the Printer of the Gazette in that island, for inserting the minutes sent to him by order of the Assembly; and the prosecution has been so popular there, that one jury staid out of court a long time (it is said three days) because they could not agree in finding the defendant not guilty, though satisfied of his innocence in point of intention.

"A juror at length was withdrawn, and a second trial afterwards had, when the following verdict was found: 'Guilty of publishing a libel, issued by the House of Assembly of Nevis, under a mistaken opinion that it was not a libel, and that the authority of that body justified his publishing their resolutions.'

"The Printer was sentenced to a month's imprisonment, and to find bail to keep the peace for three years."

The above statement was confirmed in all its parts by papers which were laid on the table of the House of Commons in the session of 1811, and in a more particular manner by the notes of evidence taken during the trial by the counsel employed, not only for the prosecutor, but for the defendant; the letters of Governor Elliot to the Earl of Liverpool; and the letters of the late J. W. Tobin, Esq. a planter of Nevis, to the Governor.

* These objects were fully accomplished. Most of the members who had supported the resolution were turned out; and their place being supplied by the near relations or personal friends of Mr. Huggins, the resolution was expunged from the Journals.

It ought to be known, that to the exertions of the gentleman who has just been mentioned, Mr. Tobin, it is owing, that these atrocious proceedings attracted the notice of government and the public. Mr. Tobin was himself a West-Indian planter; but he had nobly emancipated himself from those shackles of prejudice by which most around him continued to be bound; and he dared to be singular enough to advocate, in a West-Indian colony, the cause of the oppressed Negro. To his lasting praise be it recorded, that he spared no pains, and scrupled no sacrifice of personal ease and comfort, to bring to light and to punishment the above atrocities; and though assailed, as might have been expected, with slanders, as well as with threats of legal prosecution, he continued to pursue the same honourable course, until death deprived the world of his invaluable services.

The House of Commons' papers contain letters from Mr. Tobin to Governor Elliot, on the subject of Huggins's conduct, of which the following are extracts.

"Coming from a country where the fountains of justice still remain pure, and the liberty of the press is respected, your Excellency must, I am persuaded, on your arrival here, have experienced the same feelings of surprise and indignation, which the respectable part of this community did, on hearing a VERDICT of ACQUITTAL pronounced against one of the actors in that bloody scene! The evidence on the trial was still stronger than in the affidavits; for it appeared, not only that several of the Negroes received more than two hundred lashes, but that a still severer torture was inflicted on one of them, by the continued application of two cart-whips, to make him confess what he persevered in declaring he was ignorant of; and this was sworn to by two respectable witnesses. One of the women received two hundred and ninety-two lashes. She is still alive! But another, of a weaker frame, and whose punishment was far less, died, after a lingering illness, the 22d of June last. Had they all died, the act by which they suffered being, according to the declaration of that jury, a legal act, the authors of it would have been perfectly GUILTLESS; and every overseer in the country, however ignorant or brutal, left at full liberty to whip, mutilate, and destroy, at his pleasure, the slaves committed to his charge. But, fortunately, the verdict of a jury makes no precedent in law; and CRUELTY, by the English law, which is in full force here, is still cruelty. It was not defined by our ancestors, or its limits marked out by line and compass, but left to the heart of man to determine: and deeply it is to be lamented, that in this small community such an appeal is found insufficient.

"Mr. Huggins, the author of these evils, when I was here sixteen years ago, was then as distinguished for his cruelty as in the present day, and his conduct held in abhorrence by every good man in the community; and by no one more than by Mr. Cottle, since become his son-in-law, neither deficient himself in understanding or humanity. Mr. John Stanley, late attorney-general for these islands, some years since, assured my father, that he was examined before a committee of the House of Commons respecting a murder committed by Mr. Huggins, who has not scrupled to acknowledge to a friend, that he shot a Negro. It was understood at the time, that the body had been thrown into a negro hut, and burnt with it. An inquest was taken on the body of another Negro, who died shortly after a most inhuman flogging; but the overseer, who is still in the island, refused to give any satisfactory evidence to the grand jury who examined him. Two wretched suicides, weary of life and

the sufferings they endured, have been taken out of a cistern with their chains about them. Not whips and chains alone, but iron collars armed with spikes, have been used, and I believe still are, as instruments of punishment by this man. Ignorant and brutal as he is, he has amassed an immense fortune, and still is grasping at the possession of more and more Negroes. *His doctrine was, that it was cheaper to buy Negroes than to breed them.* He has publicly boasted of five attempts against his life by poison; and there are medical men who well know the facts. In the first six months after he took possession of the estate called Pinnings, nine Negroes died without any epidemic disease. A wretched old woman came to me a few days ago, to tell me she was compelled to work in the field. She was a favourite house-negro in her former master's family, and had nursed one of his children. Being ordered to throw a mixture of gunpowder and salt water on the mangled bodies of the Negroes whipped in the market-place, she refused, and incurred the displeasure of her master; and her intellects have since been evidently disordered. An English groom, who had been witness to many of these shocking scenes, quitted the estate with horror, and returned to England, where his testimony will have some weight, as he bears a very good character. The Negro, Fanny, who died, had not been accustomed to hard work for many years before Mr. H. got possession of the estate: but he put her into the field, and she was one of those ordered to carry out dung by night. She never worked with the hoe again after the whipping, and died of an atrophy. Of the three who composed the jury on the inquest, two were on the jury which acquitted Mr. Huggins; and the coroner was one of the magistrates, who, with unconcern, beheld the flogging in the market place. This inquest was never returned to the Secretary's office, as is usual, and was not to be found when called for by the grand jury, who, fortunately for the country, did not present either of the Mr. Huggins's, or we should have winessed a trial more scandalous than the last."

A letter accompanied these heart-sickening communications from the Earl of Liverpool to Governor Elliot, in which he stated, that the narrative of Mr. Huggins's unparalleled severity had made the deepest impression on the minds of his Majesty's Government. "It might have been hoped," observes Lord L. "that the fear of disgrace attendant on an outrage of humanity, so publicly exhibited, would have been sufficient, in any civilized country, for its prevention; but it never could have been supposed possible that so flagrant a violation of the clause of the act, called the Melioration Act, could be submitted to the cognizance of a court of justice, and be exempted from the punishment which the judge is empowered to inflict on conviction of the offender." Had his Lordship passed a few years in the West Indies, and been acquainted with the interior structure of a West-Indian community, his surprize would have been somewhat differently placed. It would have been excited by the novel circumstance of an accuser and prosecutor having been found there, bold enough to unveil such a transaction, rather than by the impunity which has attended it.

The view which Governor Elliot took of the subject, in a letter which was at the same time laid on the table of the House of Commons, is exceedingly just. The root of the evil, he remarks, lies deeper than in the remissness or culpability of the individuals who conduct the government of those islands; and he represents it as originating in the very frame of society. The acquirements of education among the White inhabitants, consisting of "managers, overseers, self-created lawyers, self-educated physicians, and adventurous merchants, with little real

capital and scanty credit, are very unequal to the task of taking a share in the government." And be it remembered, that to this class, so constituted and so qualified, the most important functions of government are entrusted. "The prevalence of principle, either moral or religious, is also (he fears) not to be fairly calculated from the repetition of the hackneyed expressions, of which an ostentatious use is frequently made in addresses, and on all occasions meant to meet the public eye at home. To collect from such a state of society," continues the Governor, "men *fit* to be legislators, judges, or jurymen, is perfectly impracticable."

"The case of Mr. Huggins," the Governor observes; "the severity of his conduct towards a number of his slaves; the remissness of the magistrates in having allowed so disgraceful a transaction to take place in the public market-place, without interfering to stop or prevent it; the legal proceedings which have since ensued both at Nevis and St. Cristophers, and which have occasioned great dissatisfaction, were some of the circumstances which bore on my mind when I expressed to your Lordship, generally, my doubts of *the inefficiency of the civil institutions, as they now exist in the other islands, for the purposes of administering justice, or for carrying into effect any sentence of law that might be opposed, either by the influence of a powerful individual, or by the spirit of party.*"

"It is indeed difficult to conceive by what perversion of human reason, and still more by what perversion of human feeling, any jury could have given a verdict of acquittal for punishments in the course of which, I believe, it appeared on incontrovertible evidence that three hundred lashes of cartwhips, or nearly that number, had been inflicted in the public market-place, without the sentence of a magistrate, upon a considerable proportion of a gang of thirty-two Negroes, who were all more or less severely punished, without having been convicted of any act which, by the most forced construction, could be deemed mutinous, or dangerous to the community at large. The problem is therefore, I fear, only to be solved by confirming the melancholy statement I have made in the outset of this dispatch, *of the unworthy and inadequate materials which constitute those tribunals so improperly styled Courts of Justice in several of the West Indies.*"

Lord Liverpool, with an expression of becoming indignation, conveyed to Governor Elliot the commands of the Prince Regent, to remove from their honourable situation, any magistrates who actually witnessed the atrocities of Mr. Huggins without interference, and who have no better justification of their conduct to allege, than ignorance of the duties attached to their office; and he desired that this might be done "with that degree of publicity that may mark to the community to which they belong, his Royal Highness's reprobation of such culpable remissness on their part."

But in what manner has the community of Nevis responded to the sentiments thus authoritatively promulged by the Prince Regent and his Ministers? Have the actors in this bloody tragedy sustained any discredit among their neighbours, in consequence of the stigma which was thus affixed to them? Quite the reverse. They have since participated largely in the highest honours which their fellow-colonists could bestow. The Assembly of Nevis consists of only fifteen members: Mr. Huggins and two of his sons have been elected members of that body by the free choice of their vicinage, and their influence in the island is absolutely paramount. The universal indignation of the British public, and the marked reprobation of the Prince Regent, ap-

pear to have clothed them with a kind of sanctity, as martyrs in the colonial cause. The conduct of Mr. Huggins which, in this country, has rendered his name a by-word of reproach, and the defence of which has been prudently abandoned even by the West-Indian party among us, seems only to have raised him to a higher elevation in the regards of the resident planters of Nevis; while those who endeavoured to bring him to punishment became the objects of general distrust and obloquy.

But what, it will be asked, is the remedy which it is in the power of Parliament to apply to the admitted evils of the West-Indian system? Has not the mother country resigned to her colonies, by formal acts, the right of interior legislation; and does not the case of America furnish a practical and conclusive illustration of the danger of interference with such a right? We reply, that the contest with America was a contest respecting taxation, and not legislation. If we were to admit in the fullest extent, that the population of every British colony inherited an exclusive right to tax themselves, yet no such right of legislating for themselves can be inferred from the principles of the British constitution, and still less from the universal usage in similar cases. In truth, the laws of Great Britain are, *ipso facto*, the laws of every British colony, until either by Charter, or by Act of Parliament, a power of local legislation is conferred upon it, or rather delegated to it. It hardly requires an argument to shew, that if this power should be systematically abused to purposes directly at variance with those for which it was conferred; if instead of being employed for the only legitimate ends of all government—the protection of subjects, and the maintenance of their just rights by an equal and impartial administration of the laws—it is made the instrument of subjecting to degradation, and wretchedness, and oppression, nine-tenths at least of the whole mass of the population; it then becomes the indispensable duty of those who have too rashly delegated such a power, to inquire into its misapplication, and, if some less summary remedy does not promise to be efficacious, even to annul the grant. Is it to be endured that the five hundred White inhabitants of Nevis, for example, shall combine to reduce to the condition of brute beasts about ten thousand of their fellow-subjects; and, though depending on the naval and military force of the mother country for the means of safety from revolt, shall yet question the right of Parliament, even to take cognizance of their internal administration, however flagrantly unjust and oppressive it may be proved to be; because, forsooth, they have, at some time or other, received what they choose to call a *British* Constitution? The charters, or constitutions, given to the different islands, expressly stipulate that nothing shall be enacted by their legislatures; and therefore, by inference, that nothing shall be in force as law, which is inconsistent with the laws of England. On this ground alone, there is not a single charter granted to a West-Indian colony which has not been forfeited; for there is not a single colony in which the gift of what is called a British Constitution has not been employed as the means of establishing a system of tyranny and despotism, not merely alien from the liberal spirit of British legislation, but revolting to every feeling of common humanity.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No. III.

## *LEGAL CONDITION OF THE SLAVE*

## EXEMPLIFIED.

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1816.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

Our next Sketch will afford a farther exemplification of the feelings of the West-Indian aristocracy towards the Negro race. The first incident which shall be detailed is drawn, not from the insulated acts of any private individual, but from the proceedings of the criminal judicature of the colony of Demarara.

On the 25th of May, 1796, Dr. Pinckard thus writes from that colony:—

"Among the distressful scenes it has lately been my lot to witness, I chanced to be at Stabroek a few mornings ago, at the time of the execution of the captain of the Bush-negroes whom I mentioned to you in a former letter*. He died faithful to his cause, and no information could be obtained from him regarding the encampment said to be still remaining in the woods. He was sentenced to be suspended by the neck for a short time, and then taken down, while yet alive, to have his head severed from his body. The executioner was a Negro, who, without any feelings of compunction, or of sorrow for his countryman, exulted in the adroitness with which he took off the head at a single blow.

"After the execution, I sat a short time with the officers, at the barrack of the 99th regiment; when another painful scene was exhibited to our observation, in the flogging of a party of Negroes, before the fiscal's door, upon the public street.

"On one of them being released from the stakes, to which he had been tied down, with his face to the earth, during his punishment, I thought that I recognised his features, and, upon going out to ascertain the fact, discovered him to be one of the carpenters, who had been set apart to work, under my direction, at the hospital. It happened, too, that he had distinguished himself by his industry, and was the man with whom I had most conversed, on account of his speaking English, and being able to explain my instructions to his fellow-workmen.

"You will believe that I felt an interest regarding him, and that I was anxious to learn by what offence he had brought upon himself the severe punishment which we had witnessed. To this end, in company with Major Say and other officers, I followed the bleeding slave to his home, where we learned that the alleged crime, for which he had been punished, was—— striking a White man; although, in fact, it appeared to have been a refusal to get up from his bed, at nine o'clock at night, to work for an European inhabitant of the town, after labouring at the hospital during the whole of the day. It was further hinted by those about him, that something of pique or prejudice, on account of the poor man expressing himself pleased with his employment at the British hospital, might possibly have operated in deafening the ear of justice against him.

"A Dutchman who chanced to be present at the time we were making inquiries, in the carpenter's shop to which the Negro belonged, told

* See First Sketch, p. 5.

us, with an air of confidence, that he had been punished for striking *him*, and cutting his elbow with a *large chisel;* shewing us the very instrument with which the wound had been made, and the precise spot whereon the offence had been committed—at the same time exhibiting his arm supported in a sling. All this being so circumstantially stated, four of us, Major Say, the surgeon of the 99th, another officer, and myself, begged to see this frightful wound which had been cut in the elbow. Some objections were offered, on the ground of disturbing the dressings, unsewing the bandages, and the like: but as Mr. Blackader promised to replace all these in fit order, we persisted in the request; and the Dutchman, finding that we were urgent, and rather inclined to be peremptory, at length submitted: but the coat was said to fit inconveniently tight, the shirt sleeve to be tied in a hard knot, and other little difficulties and delays were thrown in the way. Still we determined to subdue them all; and when, at last, we succeeded, lo! instead of the many bandages, and complex dressings which we had been taught to expect, we could neither find a plaster, nor the wound. Instead of a deep cut from a chisel, a slight bruise only appeared upon the elbow, the skin being neither cut nor broken. This strengthened our suspicions that the slave had been unfairly treated; and by prosecuting the inquiry, we learned the following history.

"The Dutchman had gone to the carpenter's shop in the evening, in search of a carpenter to do some work at a house in the town; and finding this Negro sleeping in the room over the workshop, ordered him to get up and accompany him. The poor fellow pleaded that it was night, that he had toiled through the whole of the day, and further that he was directed, by the commandant, to work only at the hospital, until that was completed. The Dutchman, nevertheless, insisted upon his going. The slave unhappily refused. Words ensued; and the White man, seizing the Black by the hair of his head, dragged him down into the workshop; where, in the scuffle, the Dutchman happened to receive a bruise of the elbow.

"The following morning a complaint was made to a public officer, high in power, stating that the Negro had struck the Dutchman, and wounded him; and it being an offence utterly unpardonable for a Black man, *under any circumstances*, to lift his hand against a White one, the miserable slave was sentenced, without further inquiry, to receive the punishment we had witnessed.

"We could not feel satisfied that the proceedings had been conducted with a due regard to justice: we therefore waited upon the person who had decreed the punishment, to inquire more into the merits of the case; and were told by him, that the Negro had been punished 'for striking a White man, with a *heavy stick*, and a *large nail* in it, and therewith cutting a deep wound in his elbow.' As this account differed from that of the Dutchman himself, we asked this man of power, if the sentence had been pronounced barely upon the man's own report. Certainly not, he replied: the deposition was also sanctioned by the testimony of *four respectable* witnesses, who appeared in evidence, having seen the Negro strike the White man with the *great stick* with a *great nail* in it.

"We then used the freedom of asking, if he had taken the trouble to look at this wounded elbow *himself*. He had, he said; 'and a sad cut it was.' If we had not been stricken dumb with the reply, we might have exclaimed, '*Alas! unhappy Blacks! what hope have ye of justice, if not only private, but also public punishments be thus awarded?*'

"As soon as our surprise and indignation would permit, we informed this *man of equity*, that four of us had minutely examined this frightful cut of the elbow, and that, with all our eight eyes strained as wide as they could stare, we had not even been able to discover the wound; adding, for his further information, that the Dutchman had, himself, assured us that it was cut with a large chisel: but that, in fact, it had neither been cut with a chisel, nor with a nail in a stick, nor cut at all; being only a slight bruise which had probably happened in the struggle, when the Dutchman was pulling about the Negro by the hair of his head. We also ventured to add, that the whole tale of this mighty wound was a scandalous imposition; and the punishment which had been inflicted upon the Negro a gross injustice. We then appealed to this arbitrary guardian of the laws, very earnestly demanding whether, in justice to the injured Negro, to the public, and to himself, who had been thus imposed upon, he would not feel it incumbent upon him to institute an inquiry regarding the fact, and to have the cruel wretch, and his four perjured witnesses, severely punished! Of course, we made no remark upon his having seen the sad cut in the elbow *with his own eyes!* Whether from feeling himself implicated, or from a reluctance arising out of any other cause, this great officer of *justice* did not seem to be of accord with our sentiments upon the subject; but endeavoured to divert us from the question by expatiating upon the paramount necessity of holding slaves in subjection, and the great danger and impolicy of overlooking, in any instance, the crime of their lifting the hand against a White man. We readily conceded to him that, upon the present system, it was absolutely necessary to be tenacious of the privileges assumed, but we could never agree that it was either just or wise to punish an unprotected man upon the false accusation of a set of perjured wretches, merely because nature had covered him with a dark skin, and them with fair ones; nor that it was fit not to expose such wanton malice to public shame, whenever the falsehood and injustice of the testimony should be detected. Therefore, pledging ourselves to appear in evidence, whenever called upon, we left the office, obtaining a promise from this man of power, to institute an inquiry, and to have justice done to the poor injured slave!

"Whether our endeavours in his behalf may be crowned with success, is extremely doubtful, but the unhappy history of our carpenter's punishment will convey to you some idea of the kind of justice to be expected by slaves. The alleged offender is not heard in mitigation, nor are any of his colour admitted in evidence, although they might be able wholly to disprove the charge; hence, whenever a White man is base enough to perjure himself in accusation, the Negro can have no hope of escaping from punishment."

Let the reader call to mind, that it was one of the criminal judges of this very colony, Mr. J. Clayton Jenyns, who, in November 1815, published in the Colonial Gazette, with the sanction of his name, and in an address to the planters of Demarara, his deliberate opinion, "that the authority of the master over his Negroes is not to be encumbered with official formalities;" "that his power cannot without danger be brought into doubt or discussion, and should never be opposed or thwarted by any intermediate authority."—Let the reader call this to mind, and then let him judge whether the administration of justice, as between master and slave, is likely to have undergone any material improvement in that colony.

From the commencement of the

Abolition-controversy in 1787, to the present hour, the colonial party have been in the habit of triumphantly adducing the testimony of officers of high rank, admirals and generals, who have served in the West Indies, in favour of the mildness and humanity of their system. Had Dr. Pinckard's acquaintance with that system been of the same superficial nature with theirs; had he known the West Indies only by the hospitalities he experienced during the first weeks of his residence at Barbadoes, we might have expected from him a similar testimony. Dr. Pinckard, however, was not satisfied with first impressions. He was determined to judge for himself; and, exercising a proper diffidence in the force of interested logic or the accuracy of ex parte assertions, to rely only on the evidence of facts. What a different view might have been given of the very transaction which is narrated above, but for the intrepid and persevering curiosity of Dr. Pinckard! And in what a light does the result of his humane interposition place the good faith and justice of the parties concerned; not merely of the unfeeling complainant, but of the judge commissioned by his Majesty, and bound by his oath, to dispense impartial justice! Does not such a fact countervail a hundred general declarations in favour of the colonial system?

But it may be supposed that Demarara forms an opprobrious exception from the claims of the other colonies to the praise of humanity and justice in the administration of their slave code. Let the reader turn to the Sketch immediately preceding, for a striking proof of the impunity with which the most express enactments in favour of the slave may be openly and contumeliously set at nought by masters, in the confidence doubtless (a confidence which in this instance proved to be but too well founded) that a jury of planters would act in the spirit of the principles of Fiscal Jenyns, and of the conduct of his predecessor as now detailed; and deem it dangerous to interfere between master and slave.

Let him turn also to a paper of Remarks on the late Insurrection at Barbadoes, p.13. for an illustration of the condition of the slaves in that island, the very oldest of our colonies, as it respects legal protection.

A farther illustration of their state in this respect will be found in the following anecdote, extracted from Dr. Pinckard's work. The narrative is contained in a letter from Barbadoes, dated in March, 1796. And let it not be forgotten that it was in Bridgetown, the capital of that island, the seat of its government, that the occurrence took place.

"I witnessed a scene of cruelty, which strongly exemplified the abject and wretched condition to which human beings are subjected in a life of slavery. It happened that I was waiting upon the quay for the Lord Sheffield's boat, when two men, apparently White Creoles, came up, and seized a Negro, who was standing near me, accusing him of having run away from his master. The poor Black assured them, that he had no master; that he belonged to Mrs. ——; that he was well known in the town; and that they must, certainly, have mistaken his person! Upon these grounds he strongly urged the impropriety of their taking him to prison: but, regardless of his remonstrances, and of their own error, they tied him with a thick cord, fastened his hands, and forced him towards the place of confinement! Curiosity led me to follow them. The poor man still pleaded his innocence, and the wrong they had committed, begging and praying to be allowed to refer them to his mistress, or to another family in the town, to identify his person. Heedless of his protestations and entreaties, they

still dragged him on; and from his only expressing a reluctance at being thus, unjustly, hurried to a prison, one of these hardened wretches struck him a violent blow on the head, with a large stick, calling out to the other, in broad Barbadoes accent, and with a great oath, 'Cut him down.'

"A little before they reached the prison they had to pass a doorway where there happened to be a strong light, by means of which one of these cruel instruments of the law of *force* instantly recognised the poor ill-treated slave, and finding that they were actually guilty of the mistake which the Negro had stated, he called out to his savage comrade, who had struck the helpless Black upon the head, 'I know the fellow: we must let him go:' upon which, they both, with dreadful imprecations, ordered him to stand, *without stirring*, whilst they should untie him; and, upon his only moving his arm to expedite the loosening of the cord, they swore, that if he dared '*to stir*, or *look savage*,' they would 'cut him down,' or put him 'directly into prison.' Such was the compensation dealt him for the unjust and cruel treatment which he had already received. The wretches not only dragged the unoffending slave to a prison, in defiance of his solemn assurances of their having erroneously seized him, and without allowing him an appeal to any one who knew his person, but, because he ventured to say they were committing an error, had the inhumanity to strike him with a force sufficient to have fractured his skull, and to threaten him with the further severity of death, or a dungeon, should he dare only to cast a *look* of displeasure*.

"What must have been the feelings of this injured man! who, after being abused and maltreated, was put in fear of his life, if he should only permit nature to assume her seat on his brow,—if the cruelty, pain, and injustice which he had suffered, should only cause a mark of disapprobation to appear upon his countenance! But nature, however proscribed, was not to be restrained by such command! While the power of memory remains to me I can never—*never* forget the indignant, but hopeless, expression of injury which overspread the features of this poor slave, as he retired! He felt aggrieved, and was conscious that ..... he had no remedy,—no appeal!"

And yet, after all this, West Indians do not scruple to tell us, that the condition of the Negro Slave in the West Indies is preferable to that of the labouring classes in Europe; and they hope to delude us by such bold misrepresentations. But let us look to the facts of the case, and not to their hardy affirmations. We willingly concede to them, indeed, that a humane master, residing on his estate, has it in his power to promote in a very high degree the comfort and happiness of his slaves. Dr. Pinckard exhibits a beautiful picture of what such a master may effect, in the case of a plantation in Berbice, at that time the property of Mr. Dougan, a distinguished philanthropist; and we doubt not that other similar instances might be found within the West-Indian Archipelago. When they occur, they shine the brighter from their contrast with the surrounding gloom: they deserve to obtain the highest meed of praise, and to be held up to universal imitation.

But, alas! how often do even these rare examples of beneficent rule tend, in the present state of things, to aggravate the evils of servitude! By this ameliorated treatment, the habit is broken of enduring the usual hardships of that condition of life; and the slave

* We are told, on Barbadian authority, that at the present moment the slaves are guilty of the crime of *looking sulky*.

passing, in the ordinary course of things, from a humane and considerate, to a severe or even ordinary master, has to undergo a new seasoning, even more destructive than the first process which has usually borne that name. His spirits sink under the transition, and the body supports it with still more difficulty than the mind.

Dr. Pinckard had not been long enough in the West Indies to witness the deplorable consequences of such reverses. He would otherwise, perhaps, have seen, in the singular happiness of Mr. Dougan's plantation, an aggravation of those evils which it appears at first sight to extenuate. He saw enough, however, of the fragility of human life in the West Indies—not to mention the great instability of West-Indian possessions—to lead him to reflect, that a very short time might give an owner of a different spirit, or, what might be almost as dangerous to the happiness of the Negroes, a new manager, to this plantation. Nor, even in the case we are contemplating, is this a mere supposition, but a sad reality. Soon after Dr. Pinckard quitted the colony, this very plantation and its slaves met the ordinary fate of such property. Its benevolent proprietor died. The estate passed into other hands; and all distinctive traces of its former admired management soon melted down into the dark unvarying line of colonial despotism.

Let not such instances, then, as those of Mr. Dougan, even if they were less rare, prevent our examining into the real nature and tendencies of our colonial bondage, as it exists both in law and in fact, with the view of applying a remedy to its evils. We cannot stand acquitted before God or our own consciences, if, after having had the enormities of this system unveiled to our view, we satisfy ourselves with a few ineffectual wishes for its reformation. The Parliament and people of England are bound to take measures for raising our fellow-subjects of the West Indies from their present state of degradation and suffering. The guilt of its unmitigated continuance will otherwise be theirs. Let them cause their voice to be distinctly heard, and the clamours of mistaken selfishness and groundless prejudice, the arts of detraction, and the efforts of malevolence, will prove equally impotent in arresting the deliberate, but determined, march of humanity and justice.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No. IV.

THE

## *NATURE OF WEST-INDIAN SLAVERY*

FURTHER ILLUSTRATED

BY CERTAIN

OCCURRENCES IN THE ISLAND OF TORTOLA.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY ELLERTON AND HENDERSON,

JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

1816.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

THE next Sketch shall be chiefly taken from papers which were laid on the table of the House of Commons, in 1812; some reference being also made to a pamphlet published at the same time (for Harding, in St. James's-street), and entitled, "The Trial of Arthur Hodge, Esq. (late one of the Members of his Majesty's Council for the Virgin Islands), at the Island of Tortola, on the 25th April, 1811, and adjourned to the 29th of the same Month, for the Murder of his Negro Man Slave, named Prosper. Stenographically taken by A. M. Belisario, Esq. one of the Grand Jury who found the Bill of Indictment; and certified to be impartial and correct by Richard Hethering-ton, Esq.* President of the Virgin Islands, and President of the Court on the Trial."

The facts sworn to in the different depositions, which led to the apprehension and trial of Mr. Hodge, were, in substance, as follows †:—

1. In January, 1806, a slave named Welcome, belonging to Mr. Hodge, was employed by him as a hunter, to go in quest of runaway slaves. After hunting for four or five days, he returned home unsuccessful; in consequence of which he was laid down by Hodge's order, and severely cart-whipped. He was *immediately* sent out to hunt a second time, and in a few days again returned unsuccessful—when, with his old wounds uncured, he was a second time, by Hodge's order, laid down, and severely cart-whipped. Welcome was immediately sent out hunting a third time; and returning in a few days, with the same success as before, he was again severely cart-whipped by Hodge's order, and put in very heavy irons, with a pudding on each leg, and a crook round his neck; and in the night-time was confined in the bilboes or stocks. He was at the same time allowed little or no food, and consequently became so weak that he could scarcely walk. In this condition, with dreadful sores, occasioned by his former whippings, he was ordered to go to a neighbouring estate; but being unable to proceed, he fell down on the road, and, being carried home, he was again cart-whipped, and died in consequence the same night.

2. Mr. Hodge having suspected two female slaves, Margaret his cook, and Else a washerwoman, of a design to poison Mrs. Hodge and his children, he poured a quantity of boiling water down their throats; and having, after this, severely cart-whipped them and chained them together, he sent them, in a state of entire nakedness, to work in the field. Both these slaves languished for a short time in a miserable condition, and then died. On the day that Mar-

* This gentleman's attestation to the impartiality and correctness of Mr. Belisario's Report, together with that of William Gordon, Esq. Secretary to his Majesty's Council, and Clerk of the Crown for the Virgin Islands, is prefixed to the pamphlet.

† Before we proceed farther, we feel it right to warn such readers, as are not armed with strong nerves, against venturing to peruse the next fourteen paragraphs.

garet died, one of the deponents going into the kitchen, and observing she was stupid, asked her what was the matter; on which she pulled a handkerchief from her head, and shewed two very severe wounds, which, she said, Mr. Hodge had given her. She soon after fell on her face, and, being carried to the sick-house, died that evening. Mr. Hodge had been heard to say, that he was resolved neither of these women should live long.

3. Some time before the death of Margaret, one of the deponents saw, in the sick-house, a child about ten years of age, named Tamsen, with the skin entirely off. The deponent asked the sick-nurse what was the matter with the child; but the sick-nurse refused to give an answer, and seemed afraid, lest her master should know that the child had been seen. On inquiry, it appeared, that the child had been dipped, by Hodge's order, into a copper of boiling liquor.

4. In the year 1807, a slave called Tom Boiler, a stout, hale, hearty man, was by Hodge's order, and in his presence, laid down and flogged without intermission, for at least an hour. After this infliction, he attempted to rise, but could not. He was taken up and carried to the sick-house, whence he never came out, but died in about a week. No doctor was called to attend him.

5. Soon after the death of Tom Boiler, another slave named Prosper, was by Hodge's order, and in his presence, laid down, and for more than an hour cart-whipped without intermission. He was then taken up by Hodge's order, and, with his hands tied behind his back, lashed to a tree. Hodge then ordered the driver to use "close quarters,"—meaning by this expression a more cruel and severe cart-whipping than is ordinarily used, the whip in this case being shortened and going all round the body, cutting every part, particularly the stomach and belly, and making at the same time comparatively little noise. In this situation, Prosper was beaten till he fainted; his head hanging down backwards, and was no longer able to cry out. He was then carried to the sick-house, where, within a fortnight, he died.

6. A slave named Jupiter, about nineteen years of age, was, by Hodge's orders, severely cart-whipped, put in heavy irons, crook puddings, &c. and allowed little or nothing to eat. He was also burnt in the mouth with a hot iron. He shortly after died.

7. On the 27th March, 1807, a new Negro Slave belonging to Hodge was cart-whipped, in his master's presence, in the most cruel manner. He died in two or three days after. When his body was carried out on a board to be buried, it was seen by one of the witnesses in a shockingly lacerated state.

8. A free man, named Peter, was hired by Hodge, as a cooper, at two joes per month. This man, though free, was repeatedly cart-whipped at close quarters, and in every other way, by order, and in the presence of Hodge, who also put chains upon him, and had him worked with the field Negroes. Peter soon died.

9. In 1808, a young slave named Cuffy, was by order of Hodge, and in his presence, severely and repeatedly cart-whipped, chained, &c. "He was cut to pieces," and had hardly any black skin remaining. After a cart-whipping, which lasted upwards of an hour, he was carried to the sick-house, where he died within a week.

10. Mr. Hodge frequently caused the children on his estate, about nine years of age, to be taken up by the heels, and dipped into tubs of water with their heads downwards, and kept there till stifled, then taken out and suffered to recover and breathe, when they were again treated in the same manner, and so repeatedly, until they have been seen to stagger and fall. On this, Mr. Hodge has ordered them to be

taken up and suspended to a tree by their hands tied together, and in this situation cart-whipped for some time at close quarters.—Among others, a Mulatto child, reputed to be his own, named Bella, was repeatedly cart-whipped by his order; and he was also seen repeatedly to strike the child with a stick on the head, so as to break her head; and also to kick her so violently as to throw her several feet from him on the ground.

11. A slave, named Cudjoe, a smart active fellow, was so severely and repeatedly cart-whipped and otherwise ill-treated by Hodge, that he died. Another slave, named Gift, who had also previously been in good health, after having been severely cart-whipped and chained, was again, with his wounds unhealed, subjected to a further severe cart-whipping, and died the same night. One of the deponents saw the body carried out for burial in a dreadful state of laceration.

12. A Negro woman named Violet, belonging to Mr. Hodge, was confined and severely flogged and cut by him for the alleged crime of stealing candles. She died in consequence. A boy, a son of this woman, ran away through his master's flogging him. When brought back, he was put in chains, and so severely flogged that he died. One of the deponents saw the boy a week before he died, and perceived, from his swelled and lacerated state, that he could not possibly recover.

13. A boy named Dick, whom Mr. Hodge charged with having stolen his geese, was very often flogged severely and in quick succession at close quarters and otherwise; in consequence of which he died. He had also been put in chains, and had his mouth burnt with a hot iron.

14. One of the deponents, besides swearing to several of the above facts, stated, that for several years, during which the deponent resided on Mr. Hodge's estate, Mr. Hodge had been guilty of repeated and excessive acts of cruelty towards his slaves. Another deponent, who had lived, at different periods, as a manager, on the estate of Mr. Hodge, called Belle Vue, and who was also a witness to many of the atrocities detailed above, swore, that at most of the very numerous and severe cart-whippings inflicted by Mr. Hodge on his slaves, the deponent was not actually present, Mr. Hodge generally choosing to inflict them without the presence of any competent witness; but that, in addition to the instances of which he happened to be an eye-witness, and which are specified above, there were many others where he saw only the effects of Hodge's cruelty, in the laceration, burnt mouths, &c. of the slaves. He was satisfied these cruelties were inflicted by Hodge himself, as otherwise he should have heard him inquire, and complain, concerning these marks of suffering in his own Negroes.—It was scarcely possible to remain in the sick-house on account of the offensive smell proceeding from the corrupted wounds of cart-whipped slaves. When this deponent first went to live on Hodge's estate, there was upon it a fine gang of upwards of a hundred able Negroes; but when the last wife of Hodge died, in 1808*, that number was so reduced by cruelty, and absconding in consequence of cruelty, that Negroes enough were not to be found on the estate to dig her grave; and therefore the deponent and Daniel Ross, Esq. one of the magistrates who signed his deposition, assisted in digging it. He could not remember the names of all the Negroes who had died in consequence of the cruelties of Hodge; but he knew the number to be great: sometimes three and four have died in the course of a day and night. On such occasions no doctor was ever called in. He lived, in all, about three years with

* She died insane; her intellects it was believed, having been disordered by the shocking scenes she was forced to witness.

Mr. Hodge; and in that time, he was satisfied that Hodge lost sixty Negroes, at least, by the severity of his punishments; and he believed that only one Negro died a natural death during the same period.

Such then were the dreadful facts of this case. On their being brought before Governor Elliot, he immediately issued a special commission for the trial of the offender. The trial took place on the 29th of April, and lasted from ten in the morning till half past five on the morning of the 30th. The jury, after deliberating for two hours, brought in a verdict of Guilty, on the first indictment, which was for the murder of Prosper; (there were eight other indictments in reserve); and sentence of death being passed upon him, he was executed on the 8th of May.—But this is not all which appears on the face of the parliamentary papers; and if we were to stop here, dreadful as the details have been, it would give but a very inadequate idea of the real nature of this singular case.

It appears, then, that Mr. Hodge had been permitted for years to proceed in his course of wholesale murder, not only with perfect impunity, but even without inquiry. And yet there was not a magistrate, nor a man, in that small island, to whom his shocking barbarity was not a matter of notoriety. At length, in consequence of some violent personal quarrels combined with party animosities, he was arraigned for murders committed four or five years before. But for these violent dissensions, his conduct would probably never have become the subject of legal investigation. The individuals who ultimately engaged in the prosecution, and those also who were brought forward as evidences on the trial, had continued members of the same small community with Mr. Hodge, during the whole period that the work of death was notoriously proceeding on his plantation, and for four years after, without one step having been taken towards a judicial investigation of his conduct. And one of the persons who took the lead in the prosecution had not only lived in habits of intimacy with him—until those party differences arose, in the course of the last year, to which we have already alluded—but had even employed his influence to protect him from prosecution*. Then, and not before, did this gentleman and his party begin to inquire after the proof of Mr. Hodge's cruelties and murders; and then, and not before, were the first depositions taken on the subject. It deserves also to be noticed, that this unhappy man continued to be the *Honourable* Arthur Hodge, Member of his Majesty's Council for the Virgin Islands, till after his committal, when he was suspended from his seat in council by Governor Elliot.

It has been already mentioned, that the jury took two hours to consider of their verdict; and when it was at length returned *guilty*, it was accompanied by a recommendation of the prisoner to mercy by a majority of the jurors. To this recommendation, Governor Elliot, with a becoming firmness, refused to pay any attention. Such, however, was

* A gentleman, distinguished for his probity and humanity, who endeavoured during a temporary residence at Tortola to bring Hodge to justice for some gross acts of oppression towards a free Person of Colour, was frustrated in his humane attempt chiefly by the instrumentality of this very person. See, to the same effect, the letter of Mr. Musgrave in the printed papers laid before the House of Commons.

Mr. Hodge was celebrated as a duellist, and was said to have killed several men in duels. In the course of the party squabble mentioned above, he is reported to have challenged his chief opponent. That gentleman naturally enough wished to decline such a perilous meeting. It was convenient, therefore, to bring forward at that particular time those criminal charges which had been so long and otherwise so unaccountably deferred, and which but for this *demelee*, might never have been heard of in this country.

the state of irritation produced by the novel and unprecedented circumstance of a White man condemned to death on account of the murder of his own slave, and such the dread of an attempt on the part of the White population for his rescue; that Governor Elliot, who had judged it prudent to proceed to Tortola in person, that he might be at hand to watch the course of events, felt himself under the necessity of proclaiming martial law, calling out the colonial militia, and availing himself of the aid of a frigate, in order to awe the turbulent into submission. In consequence of these measures, the threatened disturbance was prevented, and the sentence of the law was regularly executed. The Governor observes, in his dispatch; "The state of irritation, and I may almost say of anarchy, in which I have found this colony (Tortola), rendered the above measures indispensable for the preservation of tranquillity, and for ensuring the due execution of the fatal sentence of the law against the late Arthur Hodge. Indeed, it is but too probable, that, without my presence here as commander-in-chief, in a conjuncture so replete with party animosity, unpleasant occurrences might have ensued."

The reply of Lord Liverpool to these communications, is highly honourable to him and to his Majesty's Government. It is dated the 20th June, 1811.

"I received your several dispatches from No. 34 to No. 41 inclusive; and however deep the indignation which your former letters, in reference to the case of Mr. Huggins, have excited, and however strong my apprehension that the law, as at present administered, is inadequate to the prevention of similar excesses, I could still little have expected the additional detail of cruelties that is therein conveyed.

"The individual by whom they were perpetrated, has suffered the severest and most ignominious punishment the law can inflict: and it only now remains for me to express an earnest hope, that this rare example of just retribution may effect that change in the treatment of the unfortunate slaves, which it should require no other motives to produce than the common feeling of humanity towards a fellow-creature, or even the common regard to public decency.

"I am commanded by his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to convey to you the high satisfaction he has derived from your anxious endeavours on this occasion, to secure impartial justice on the trial, and the solemn execution of the sentence; and his full approbation of your conduct, in not permitting the intercession of the individuals, who partly composed the jury by which Mr. Hodge was tried, to suspend the termination of that iniquitous career which he had but too long been suffered to pursue."

But it has been said, and probably may be said again, that the execution of Mr. Hodge, himself a planter, for the murder of his slave, is a complete refutation of all that has been alleged respecting the frame of West-Indian society, and the inefficacy of West-Indian meliorating laws. But, surely, no one who shall have attentively perused the above details, will be disposed to advance such an argument, or to question the justness of the views which are contained in the preceding Sketches. The vindication of those views might be safely left to the inferences fairly arising from all the circumstances of this very transaction. Indeed, instead of being weakened, they are greatly strengthened by this sickening tale of horrors; which, taken in all its parts, goes directly to establish the necessity of those silent but efficacious measures of parliamentary controul and interference that have been recently proposed, but the bare apprehension of which has given so much alarm to the West-

Indian body, and roused them to so vigorous and concurrent a resistance.

This will appear still more strongly, by a reference to some particulars contained in the pamphlet mentioned at the beginning of this Sketch, the authenticity of which is placed, as has been shewn above, so much beyond dispute, that it may almost be considered as a public document.

The island of Tortola is only about fifteen miles long and seven broad. It contains about 800 or 900 White inhabitants, and about 7000 Slaves*. The estate of Mr. Hodge was very near the chief town of Tortola; so near as to be in full view of the barristers and other persons who were sitting in the court-house, in which his trial was proceeding†. His cruelties were not practised in some remote and unfrequented spot, from which their distant rumour might be supposed with difficulty to reach the public ear, but in the best peopled part of the island, in the view and within a short ride of the seat of the colonial government. It seems altogether impossible, therefore, that they should have been concealed from the general knowledge of the community in which he lived.

It is admitted, that in the year 1803, Mr. Hodge was the owner of nearly 140 Negroes; and that in the year 1811 this number had been reduced to 35‡. These were facts, indeed, which must have been generally known, because a poll-tax was payable in Tortola on slaves; and the decrease must, therefore, have been matter of record. But, independently of this circumstance, the cruelties of Mr. Hodge appear to have been quite notorious. This is affirmed in the course of the trial, without any attempt at contradiction. How, indeed, could it have been otherwise? We might as well suppose, that in a parish in England, containing seven or eight thousand inhabitants, it would be possible for seventy or eighty murders to be committed, in the course of three or four years, without attracting general attention, as that the atrocities of Mr. Hodge should not have been matter of notoriety in Tortola. Indeed, it is admitted that they must have been known, by report at least, to every individual of this little community. The prosecutor, it is said, had only subjected to legal inquiry "that which was long known, but remained unnoticed and uninvestigated for want of proof," &c*.

How happened it, then, that no judicial investigation of these transactions should have taken place—that murder after murder should be reported to have been committed by Mr. Hodge, and that the Coroner should have made no inquisition for the blood that had been thus wantonly shed? One cause of this neglect is incidentally explained in the course of the trial.

One of the witnesses, of the name of Perreen Georges, a free Person of Colour, being asked why she had not produced her testimony against Mr. Hodge at an earlier period, answered, "I dared not—Mr. Hodge would kill me†."

A second witness, Stephen M'Keough, a White man, was asked, "Have you had any conversations with Mr. J. Skelton, junior, relating to the prisoner?" "I did mention to him," was the answer, "Mr. Hodge's treatment of his slaves, years ago, when I left his employ the first time, and when I went to Paraquita Bay: I begged him not to mention it again." "Why," it was asked "did you enjoin secrecy?" "Because," he re-

* The return of the population, laid before Parliament, is not very precise. It includes all the British Virgin Islands in one total of 1200 Whites and 9000 Slaves. It is calculated, by persons who have resided in those islands, that Tortola alone contains about three-fourths of the whole.

† Trial, &c. p. 37. ‡ Ib. p. 138.

* Trial, &c. p. 137. † Ib. p. 66.

plied, "I knew that if Mr. Hodge knew it, he would not hesitate to take my life*."

Nor did these apprehensions cease even after Mr. Hodge had been arrested. It is distinctly asserted by Mr. Lisle, and not denied by the prisoner's counsel, that "the depositions were kept back, because, if the prisoner or his friends were permitted to know who had testified against him, *they might never be forthcoming* †." Nay, it was even deemed necessary to place the two principal witnesses under special protection, as "they were afraid of being assassinated" by the friends of Mr. Hodge.

West-Indian gentlemen have affected to ridicule the care with which Mr. Wilberforce and the Directors of the African Institution have concealed the names of individuals, resident in the West Indies, from whom they have derived important information. But does not what transpired in the case of Mr. Hodge fully justify their caution? If the danger was so imminent which arose from preferring against this single individual, peculiarly circumstanced as he was, a charge that brought, or seemed to bring, the relative rights of master and slave to a judicial issue, how much more formidable would be the danger of being detected in giving information, which, it would be apprehended (whether justly or not), might affect the character or the interests of the whole West Indian community? If the witnesses to the cruelties practised by Mr. Hodge could scarcely be protected from violence, though supported by a powerful party, what hope of safety could an individual entertain, who should be discovered to have given evidence, for example, of the infractions of the Abolition Act that had taken place in the same or any other island? He would be regarded as a traitor to the common cause, and could expect no mercy.

The danger which such a person would incur will be further illustrated by the following fact:—

"About thirty years ago, a man was bold enough to inform, in one of the most important and most polished of the Leeward Islands, in a case of prohibited importation. He was immediately seized, tried publicly by a self-constituted court, convicted of the foul offence of being an informer, and sentenced to tarring and feathering, and perpetual banishment. Accordingly, in contempt of his privileges as a White Man, he was stripped to the skin, covered with tar and feathers, and carried with a drum beating the Rogue's March, at mid-day, through all the streets of the town; no magistrate or peace-officer daring or choosing to interfere. He was next put on board an American ship then passing the harbour, and carried off as a convict to the distant island of Jamaica, from whence he could not return to his home without going first to North America. He had the hardihood, nevertheless, in a few months to return; called on the government for redress; and the Attorney-general was ordered to prosecute the judge of the mock tribunal, and the immediate executioners of the sentence. He did so, with much zeal, for the honour of the government; but to no effect. Not a witness but the prosecutor himself could be found to depose to facts which one half of the free population of the island had seen; and the jury, some of whom could probably have confirmed him, as eye-witnesses, chose to disbelieve him, and found a verdict of NOT GUILTY. The man, who had been kept in gaol for his security during the prosecution, was glad at the end of it to become a voluntary exile for life."

With such examples before their eyes, would it not be altogether unwarrantable in Mr. Wilberforce or the Directors of the African In-

* Trials, &c. p. 77. † Ib. p. 13.

stitution, to give up the names of their informants, while still resident in the West Indies, to the tender mercies of a West-Indian mob?

But how, then, did it happen that Mr. Hodge should at length have been brought to trial? This question has already been in some measure answered. The dread of Mr. Hodge's vengeance, excited by a personal quarrel, at length led to the steps which issued in this rare act of justice. This circumstance is clearly alluded to by the Solicitor-General acting for the Crown, in his closing address to the Jury. Speaking of the prosecutor as "at one time the friend and companion of Mr. Hodge," he adds; "Whether these quondam friends have quarrelled or not; or whether the accuser of Mr. Hodge discovered the malignity of his heart, and the atrocity of his acts; or whether the accusation proceeded from a motive of ill-will or revenge, is not an object of minute inquiry on your part, provided the fact charged in the indictment be proved," &c.*

In truth, the peril of prosecuting Mr. Hodge, for his cruelties, was at length encountered, to avoid what appeared, at least under the government of Mr. Elliot, the still greater peril of having to encounter this ruffian in single combat; while the prosecutor's risk in making the attempt was still farther diminished by the violent party dissensions which at that time prevailed among the White inhabitants of the island.

We wish now particularly to call the reader's attention to the following extract from the speech of the leading Counsel for the Crown: it will be found to confirm much of what has been already said respecting the legal condition of the West-Indian Slave:—

"Why the witnesses, whom you will soon hear, did not earlier publish his guilt, you will learn from themselves: why he was not sooner arrested and brought to trial, you may as well, individually, ask yourselves as any other person; for you must each, as well as the rest of the community, have learned from rumour the catalogue of his crimes. But what is every body's business usually is performed by nobody*; and not knowing where testimony might be procured of his guilt, no individual would risk the chance of rendering himself the victim of Mr. Hodge's resentment and vengeance, by making accusations he might not be able to substantiate as true: for you well know, gentlemen, that only on the evidence of *free persons* can a free person be convicted. *Policy* has decreed, that slaves shall only be permitted to testify against their fellow-slaves, and not against *free persons in any case whatsoever*. Were it otherwise, I would here introduce a number of sable wretches, as witnesses, bearing the ostensible external marks of the prisoner's cruelty, whose very appearance would make humanity shudder, and whose tales of woe would cause every nerve within you to vibrate with mental agony†."

The same speaker furnishes another striking illustration of the feelings with which many of the West-Indian planters regard the slave population.

* Trial, &c. p. 127.

* Were there, then, no magistrates in Tortola? Or was there no coroner to institute an inquiry? Might not Perreen Georges and Stephen M'Keough have been subjected to examination in 1807, as well as in 1811? Or could no one in that island be found to vindicate the cause of outraged justice without the stimulus of personal danger or party animosity?

† Not the slightest attempt was made by the prisoner's counsel to rebut or to weaken this opprobrious statement. It was even given in evidence, without the slightest contradiction, that the Negroes of Mr. Hodge had long been known by certain marks which they bore of his ingenuity in the art of inflicting torture. See Trial, p. 115.

"Notwithstanding," he observes, "the heinousness of the offence, the magnitude of the guilt, the atrocity of the crime, when the prisoner was brought up, a few days since, under a writ of Habeas Corpus, it was not only asserted to be an offence bailable at law, but it was boldly declared;—blush, humanity—blush, justice—to hear it; —it was boldly asserted, that a Negro, being property, '*it was no greater offence in law for his owner to kill him, than it would be to kill his dog* *!'"

He then employs much ingenious legal argument to disprove this position, and evidently appears to have regarded it as by far the most formidable difficulty with which he had to contend in the conduct of his cause †.

Before concluding this Sketch, it may be proper to advert to two objections which have been advanced against the relevancy of such statements as the preceding.

1. It is said, that these tales of horror are out of date, and that it is therefore altogether unwarrantable to produce them as evidence of the existing state of society in the West Indies. Five years, however, constitute no very great lapse of time; only a little more than the period during which Justice slumbered over the crimes of Mr. Hodge. But, to give any force to this objection, it ought to be shewn, that the length to which Mr. Hodge had run his murderous career without provoking a single inquiry, and the entire impunity of Mr. Huggins in a course of conduct but little less atrocious, had induced the colonial legislatures to pass laws which should either prevent the recurrence, or ensure the punishment, of similar enormities. But this cannot be shewn. The laws which regulate the relation of master and slave continue unaltered.

2. But, it is further affirmed to be in the highest degree unjustifiable to exhibit these transactions as conveying a fair impression of the conduct of West-Indians generally towards their slaves; that Huggins and Hodge are excepted cases, whose example it would be as unjust to bring forward, as a specimen of colonial humanity, as it would be to cite the case of Mrs. Brownrigg, as fairly illustrative of the ordinary treatment of English apprentices.

To this we reply, that it never was intended to exhibit the cruelties of Huggins and Hodge as fair specimens of the usual course of West-Indian management. On the contrary, these cases of admitted atrocity are produced as illustrating, not the ordinary conduct of colonial masters, but the state of colonial legislation, and of the colonial judicatories, and the state also of feeling which prevails among the Whites in the islands with respect to their Black fellow-subjects.

Let us suppose for a moment, that such atrocities had been committed in this country as these men were known to have been guilty of:—how different would have been the prevailing sentiment with respect to the perpetrators of them; how different the conduct of our magistrates, and courts of justice! Here it would have been found difficult to restrain the indignation of the public from breaking forth into acts of premature violence. But in the West Indies the *White* mob is uniformly on the side of the oppressor. Mr. Huggins rises to fresh dignity after his disgraceful acquittal, as one who had suffered persecution in the sacred cause of White supremacy. The witnesses to Mr. Hodge's atrocities must be sedulously guarded from popular fury. Found guilty, this monster, though

* Trial, p. 39.

† Ib. pp. 40—48.—One of the persons summoned on the jury, and who was challenged by the Crown, said, He thought that Hodge's trial "would be hurtful to the West-India islands: it would make the Negroes saucy."—p. 21.

loaded with the blood of scores of murdered slaves, is recommended as a fit object of Royal Clemency! And when at length condemned to pay the forfeit of his crimes on the scaffold, the Governor is obliged to repair to the spot with an armed force to prevent a rescue!

Admitting, as we readily do, that the cases of Huggins and Hodge are cases of peculiar enormity, yet whence arose that powerful prepossession in their favour which secured to the former an acquittal, in the face of the clearest evidence, from twelve men sworn to return a true verdict; and which rendered the condemnation of the other the occasion of such imminent peril to the peace of the colony?

We do not accuse the resident West-Indians generally with acting as Huggins and Hodge have done; but we charge them with favouring such criminals merely because they are Whites and of the cast of masters, and with tolerating their crimes because committed on those who are Black or of the cast of slaves.

Is it fitting, that to a mere handful of men, actuated by such feelings and prejudices as these, the Parliament of Great Britain should continue to leave the uncontrouled right of legislating for hundreds of thousands of their fellow-subjects? —Or will any man believe that a community, thus constituted, stands in no need of a Registry Bill to prevent the illicit importation of new Negroes, or to protect the rights of such of that race as are entitled to freedom?

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
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# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No. V.

## ANECDOTES,

TENDING

TO ELUCIDATE THE

*NATURE OF OUR COLONIAL BONDAGE*

AS IT RESPECTS,

I.—THE DRIVING SYSTEM.

II.—THE GENERAL TREATMENT OF SLAVES.

III.—THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY SLAVERY ON THE CHARACTER OF WHITE WOMEN.

IV.—THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS HABITS OF THE COLONISTS.

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1816.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

THE present Sketch is intended to be a mere collection of Anecdotes, extracted from the invaluable work of Dr. Pinckard. Their object is to elucidate the nature of our Colonial Bondage as it respects, The Driving System, The General Treatment of Slaves, The Effects produced by it on the Character of the White Women, and The Moral and Religious Habits of the Colonists.

## I. THE DRIVING SYSTEM.

1. "At one spot, in the course of our ride, we had our attention arrested by observing a party of four, almost naked, females working in a cane field. Curiosity would not allow us to pass on without devoting to them a moment of particular regard. We, therefore, went a little off the road to approach them nearer; when we found that they were labouring with the hoe, to dig, or cut up the ground, preparatory to the planting of sugar; and that a stout robust-looking man, apparently White, was following them, holding a whip at their backs. Observing that he was the only one of the party who was idle, we inquired why he did not partake of the task, and were told, in reply, that it was not his business—that he had only to keep the women at work, and to make them feel the weight of the whip if they grew idle or relaxed from their labour." Vol. I. p. 140.

2. "On my way down the coast lately from Mahaica, I observed among the slaves, what to me was a novelty; although I was told, by a gentleman of the colony, that it was by no means uncommon. In one of the fields we passed a gang of Negroes employed at their labour, with a female driver carrying the whip at their backs. On my remarking that it was not a becoming duty for the *beau sexe*—that the nature of the lady might be too tender to admit of her correcting the strong, and her arm too feeble to enable her to chastise the idle—my companion replied, that I was much mistaken; for, on the contrary, the '*women drivers*' were sometimes peculiarly severe, and often corrected the stoutest slaves with no feeble arm." Vol. II. p. 121.

3. "In the course of our walk, I had the opportunity of observing a species of Negro-labour that was new to me; having met a party of sixteen naked slaves, male and female, in the act of dragging the trunk of an immense tree out of the forest, with ropes. They were conducted by a driver with his whip; and pulled on the load by mere strength of arm, having no assistance from any machinery, and only availing themselves of the simple expedient of placing small billets of wood under the tree, at short distances from each other, in order to prevent it from sinking into the dirt, and doubling their toil." Vol. II. p. 199.

4. "In walking through Kingston (Jamaica), I observed an example of slavery unlike any that had met my eye to windward—sixteen or eighteen Negroes linked in a sort

of harness, and forming a regular team, were drawing an immense trunk of mahogany, conducted by a driver with a cart-whip, who went whistling at their side, and flogging them on, precisely as an English carter does his horses." Vol. II. p. 371.

5. At p. 129, Vol. II. Dr. Pinckard speaks of some soldiers, who, having been confined for irregular conduct, were indignant at seeing Black Rangers placed over them as centinels, who "since their arrival in the colony had toiled all day in the field *goaded as horses or oxen.*" In the course of his reasoning on the subject, he adds, in a strain very different from what we have been accustomed to hear from the mouths of some West Indians—"Compared to slavery the restrictions of military discipline are as exquisite freedom; and the Negro who has once tasted it cannot be expected to return quietly to the yoke, and again expose his back to the whip." Vol. II. p. 130.

## II. General treatment of slaves.

1. "In our perambulations, we often witness gross and disgusting scenes among the slaves. Lately we saw a naked washing party, whose skins exhibited very indecently the crowded scars of repeated punishment." Vol. I. p. 123.

2. "Very much to the discredit of Barbadoes, numbers of old, diseased, or decrepit Negroes, objects of compassion and of horror, are seen lying at the corners, or begging about the streets. This, like the toleration of the swarms of mendicants in England, is a nuisance for which there is no excuse. If these poor unfortunate Negroes be free, they should be relieved by a general tax upon the island: if slaves, the law should compel every master to provide for his own. Should the laws of humanity be insufficient, and those of justice inadequate, a law of coercion should constrain the unfeeling owner to protect and cherish the being, whose youth and vigour have been expended for his benefit; and who, having worn out his days in the heavy toils of bondage, is grown aged and infirm!" Vol. I. p. 295.

3. "It has happened to me to be addressed by a wretched slave, strongly entreating me to purchase her from her master." "She was a very decent young woman, here termed 'a house-wench.' The hardships and ill treatment she had suffered, had created, she said, such an entire dislike to her present home, that if she could find no '*good massa*' who would buy her, she had determined to try to escape from her misery by running away. The poor creature shuddered as she mentioned this expedient, sensible that if she should be retaken, her sufferings, great as they were, would be sadly multiplied. Still she declared she was firmly resolved to hazard the attempt, rather than continue her, now, wretched life, hopeless of relief.

"The heavy tear swelled on her dark cheek as she related the severities to which she had been subjected. Her tale was at once interesting and distressful. It needed not the aid of eloquence to move compassion. The simple narration of the cruelties imposed, and the punishments inflicted for only trivial faults, instantly roused the feelings, and in strong appeal begat a new regret that hosts of human creatures, for the mere lucre of a few of their fellow-beings, differing in the colour of their skin, should be degraded to a situation, which not only deprives them of the command of their persons, but, also, robs them of all the powers of will.

"Divested of every right, a slave has no redress, not even against the bitterest wrongs: however oppressed, however injured, he has no re-

source—no means of relief! Not having the power of changing his home, he has no escape from ill usage or cruelty; but is condemned to travel the long journey of life in hopeless discontent." Vol. I. p. 342.

4. "In my walk to the Negro-yard I met a slave, who appeared under a peculiar mode of punishment, being compelled to wear an iron collar with three long spikes projectingfrom it, in sharpened points, to the distance of eight or ten inches from his person. What crime had led to this strange method of punishment I did not learn. The poor man not only suffered the annoyance of moving about, loaded with this heavy collar, but he was effectually prevented from lying down, and from approaching near to any person without the danger of injuring him with the sharp points of his iron yoke." Vol. I. p. 470.

5. "Two unhappy Negroes, a man and a woman, having been driven by cruel treatment to abscond from the plantation Lancaster, were taken a few days since, and brought back to the estate, when the manager, whose inhuman severity had caused them to fly from his government, dealt out to them his avenging despotism with more than savage brutality. Taking with him two of his strongest drivers, armed with heavy whips, he led out these trembling and wretched Africans, early in the morning, to a remote part of the estate, too distant for the officers to hear their cries; and there, tying down first the man, he stood by, and made the drivers flog him with many hundred lashes, until, on releasing him from the ground, it was discovered that he was nearly exhausted: in this state the monster struck him on the head, with the but end of a large whip, and felled him again to the earth; when the poor Negro, escaping at once from his slavery and his sufferings, expired at the murderer's feet. But not satiated with blood, this savage tyrant next tied down the naked woman, on the spot, by the dead body of her husband, and with the whips, already purple with gore, compelled the drivers to inflict a punishment of several hundred lashes, which had nearly released her also from a life of toil and torture.

"Hearing of these acts of cruelty, on my return from the hospital, and scarcely believing it possible that they could have been committed, I went immediately to the sick-house to satisfy myself by ocular testimony: when, alas! I discovered that all I had heard was too fatally true; for, shocking to relate, I found the almost murdered woman lying stark-naked on her belly, upon the dirty boards, without any covering to the horrid wounds which had been cut by the whips, and with the still warm and bloody corpse of the man extended at her side, upon the neck of which was an iron collar, and a long heavy chain, which the now-murdered Negro had been made to wear from the time of his return to the estate. The flesh of the woman was so torn, as to exhibit one extensive sore, from the loins almost down to her hams; nor had humanity administered even a drop of oil to soften her wounds: the only relief she knew, was that of extending her feeble arm in order to beat off the tormenting flies, with a small green bough, which had been put into her hand for that purpose by the sympathising kindness of a fellow-slave. A more horrid and distressful spectacle can scarcely be conceived. The dead man, and the almost expiring woman had been brought home, from the place of punishment, and thrown into the Negro hospital, amidst the crowd of sick, with cruel unconcern. Lying on the opposite side of the corpse was a fellow-sufferer, in a similar condition to the poor woman. His buttocks, thighs, and part of his back, had been flogged into one large sore, which was

still raw, although he had been punished a fortnight before.

"The following day we witnessed the preparations for the funeral of their murdered brother, by his fellow-slaves. It was conducted in their usual manner, not with the afflicting solemnity of the Christian rites, but with all the mirthful ceremonies of African burial, forming a scene of gaiety, which consisted of music, dancing, singing, and loud noise. They all seemed to rejoice more in his escape from pain and misery, than to sorrow for his loss."

"A few day after the funeral, the attorney of the estate happened to call at Lancaster to visit the officers: and the conversation naturally turning upon the late cruelty of the manager, and the consequent injury derived to the proprietor, we asked him what punishment the laws of the colony had provided for such horrid and barbarous crimes; expressing our hope that the manager would suffer the disgrace he so justly merited; when, to our great surprise, the attorney smiled, and treated our remarks only as the dreams of men unpractised in the ways of slavery. He spake of the murder with as little feeling as the manager had perpetrated it, and seemed to be amused at our visionary ideas, of *punishing a white man* for his conduct towards slaves! To the question, whether the manager would not be dismissed from the estate, he replied, '*Certainly not;*' adding, that '*if the Negro had been treated as he deserved he would have been flogged to death long before.*' Such was the amount of his sympathy and concern! The laws of the colony, he said, were intended to prevent any person from chastising a slave with more than thirty-nine lashes, for the same offence; but by incurring only a small fine, he could, at any time, punish a Negro with as many hundred lashes as he might wish, 'although the governor and the fiscal' were standing at his elbow.

"I was careful to observe the progress of the hideous wounds inflicted upon the poor woman, and to watch her recovery; and you will be shocked to know that her sufferings were severely increased by the inhuman neglect which succeeded to her punishment. One morning, upon hearing the loud cries of a female, I was led to look out at my window, when I saw some Negroes carrying this unfortunate woman from the sick-house into the yard, where they laid her down in the dirt, upon the bare ground, amidst a heavy shower of rain; then, kneeling at her sides, they proceeded to examine minutely into her wounds: and you will scarcely hold it credible, when I tell you that they were employed a full half-hour *picking maggots out of her sores!!!* The ulcerations had penetrated to a great depth, particularly withinside the thighs, where the lashes of the whips had cut round, and torn the flesh in a frightful manner. The ulcers were very raw and considerably enlarged, by the gnawing of the maggots which had been bred within them. I cannot describe to you the horror I felt at this deplorable sight. I had often heard of *maggoting* sheep, but this was the first instance I had met with of maggoting a human being; and I felt additional distress in finding the subject of it an unhappy female, whose punishment had been already severe, and in whom the occasion for such a beastly process might and ought to have been prevented, if the common dictates of humanity had been observed. The poor afflicted wretch groaned heavily under her sufferings, and the operation, which in itself was severely painful, was rendered so in a still greater degree by the roughness of her untutored surgeons. During the whole of the time, she was exposed naked to the rain; also to

the eyes of slaves, officers, soldiers, and all who chanced to pass that way. It was a spectacle, equally offensive to humanity and to delicacy!

"On representing the diabolical cruelty of this case to the surgeon, he remarked to us, that the sores, from punishments, did not usually fall under his inspection, but were left to the care of the *Negro-doctor* who had the charge of the sick-house; and that nothing was more common than to see the wounds filled with maggots: 'indeed,' said he, 'it is often our greatest difficulty, in the practice of surgery in these climates, to prevent the breeding of insects in the sores.'

"I am sorry to remark, that the Lancaster plantation has been distinguished for some time past, on account of the inhuman treatment of the slaves: in fact, it seemed as if cruelty had become contagious upon this estate; for we learn, from the most respectable authority, that a former proprietor was so hardened in his savage conduct that, frequently, when an unfortunate Negro was bound down to the earth, and groaning under the severe pain of two heavy lashes, he would strike him a blow upon the head with the but end of his whip, between each of the strokes given by the drivers; and that, carrying his barbarity still further, he would sometimes order the teeth of the slave to be torn out with a pair of iron pincers, and would himself stand by to see the torture inflicted.

"I can anticipate your sentiments upon reading the history of these shocking punishments, for they afford lamentable examples of the horrors and injustice of slavery; and you cannot but think, with me, that the system which gives to an individual the power of lording his worst passions, over a fellow-being, uncontrolled, admits of no defence. It is a violation of nature, in which humanity is outraged, and our species degraded!" Vol. II. pp. 45—54.

6. "On the morning of January 13th, a well-looking robust Negro unexpectedly presented himself at my door, tendering his services, and begging that he might be allowed to work for me. Upon my going out to speak with him, his countenance gladdened with joy, and looking animated and cheerful, he said he would '*do ebery ting to 'blige massa, wait upon massa, clean massa's horse, and do all de work massa tell him.*'

"Not immediately recollecting his features, I asked who he was, whence he came, and how it happened that he addressed himself to me? when he replied, '*Ah massa, if you no remember Prince, Prince no forget dat massa tell 'em soldiers for break one great iron collar off Prince's neck, and gave him for gnyaam when massa at Mahaica!*' This brought him to my recollection; and I recognised an unhappy slave, whom, in one of my walks at Mahaica, I had met wandering in a cotton-field, bearing a heavy iron collar upon his neck, with three long spikes projecting from it, terminating in sharp points, at the distance of nearly a foot and a half from his person; and with his body flogged into deep ulcers, from his loins to his hams. In this state, and almost starving with hunger, he appealed to my feelings. *Humanity* pleaded in his behalf, and, without a very scrupulous inquiry into the whys and wherefores of the punishment, its dictates were obeyed. The poor man followed me to the fort: the soldiers grew indignant on seeing his naked sores; and the impulse of their feelings not being opposed, his neck was quickly freed from its load, and the massive yoke and its spikes were as speedily converted into pot-hooks for the benefit of the mess. Thus made happy, the thankful slave had now found his way to my home

at La Bourgade, in order to make his further acknowledgments, and to tender me his services. Shall it be said that Africans know not the divine sentiment of gratitude?" Vol. II. p. 174.

7. "I took my farewel dinner with a party at the commandant's; and, in the evening, after I had retired, but while the other gentlemen remained at table, they were disturbed by the groans of some person, who seemed to be in extreme agony. Prompted by feelings of humanity, Colonel Hislop sent one of the officers to the house, from whence the afflicting cries were thought to proceed, in order to ascertain if any person were ill, or if it might be in his power to afford relief; when, to the astonishment of all who were present, a scene of the most shocking cruelty was discovered. Instead of meeting with any one in sickness, the gentleman deputed upon this commission found a wretched slave suffering under a species of torture which could only have been invented by the most diabolical malignity.

"The unfortunate man was tied down to the ground, with his limbs stretched out to the utmost extent; the legs being fastened with heavy chains, and the hands with strong cords, which were painfully tightened by being twisted with pieces of wood, placed across the wrists. For the honour of human nature, I hope it is a solitary, although an absolute, fact, that this poor Negro had been so confined, without being allowed a morsel of food, for three days; and with the additional cruelty of being burnt across the fleshy parts of his person at repeated intervals, with red-hot iron. Could such a mode of torture have suggested itself to any other mind than that of a blacksmith? which was the occupation followed by the depraved monster, into whose fiery hands it was the lot of this unfortunate African to have fallen!

"The dreadful tale being reported to the commandant, a file of the guard was instantly marched to the house, with orders to release the sufferer; and quickly, with the irons and cords remaining on his limbs, he was led before the colonel and party, whose timely humanity had saved his life. His fetters were now removed; food and wine were offered to him; and he was soothed with the assurance that justice should be done to his cause: but his strength was so exhausted as scarcely to admit of restoration! Upon swallowing a morsel of bread, moistened with wine and water, the effect upon his famished stomach was so painful as to produce extreme distress, and he nearly fainted: but, after a little time, he was so much recovered by the kind attentions of the commandant and his friends, as to be sensible of the anxieties of those about him; and, when questioned regarding the crime which had provoked this horrid punishment, it proved that he was utterly ignorant for what fault, or upon what pretence, he had been treated with such savage barbarity!

"The hardened wretch, his master, was examined as to the nature of the offence which had urged him to this frightful example of cruelty. Whether his consciousness of the insignificance of the alleged misdemeanor, or the dread of the requital he merited, prevented him from avowing it, I could not learn, but he persisted in the most obstinate silence respecting it, and replied only by confused and hurried appeals, piteously imploring the commandant to pardon him, and beseeching that he might not be subjected to the ignominy of a personal punishment. His agitation was excessive: forgetful how grievously he had debased himself by his outrageous conduct, the apprehension of being

exposed to the degradation of a corporal chastisement so entirely possessed his mind, that no direct answer could be obtained from him; every reply being an humble petition for mercy, or an anxious supplication not to be stigmatized with the disgraceful retribution, which he seemed conscious that he deserved." Vol. II. p. 332.

III. THE EFFECTS PRODUCED BY SLAVERY ON THE CHARACTER OF WHITE WOMEN.

1. "The corporal punishment of slaves is so common, that instead of exciting the repugnant sensations felt by Europeans on first witnessing it, scarcely does it produce, in the breasts of those accustomed to the West Indies, even the slightest glow of compassion. The lady I have above alluded to appears of good natural disposition, and in no degree disposed to general cruelty; but the frequency of the sight has rendered her callous to its usual influence upon the feelings. Being one morning at her house, while sitting in conversation, we suddenly heard the loud cries of a Negro smarting under the whip. Mrs. ——— expressed surprise on observing me shudder at his shrieks; and you will believe that I was in utter astonishment to find her treat his sufferings as matter of amusement. It proved that the punishment proceeded from the arm of the lady's husband, and fell upon one of her own slaves! Can you believe that, on learning this, she exclaimed with a broad smile, 'Aha! it will do him good! A little wholesome flagellation will refresh him: it will sober him: it will open his skin, and make him alert. If Y— was to give it them all, it would be of service to them!'

"I could not compliment the lady upon her humanity. The loud clang of the whip continued; and the poor imploring Negro as loudly cried, '*Oh massa, massa,—God A'mighty—God bless you, massa! I beg you pardon! Oh! massa, Oh! I beg you pardon! Oh! God A'mighty—God bless you!*'—Still the whip sounded aloud, and still the lady cried, 'Ay, it is very necessary!'

"Such is the effect of habit in subduing even our most amiable emotions. Could this lady have known how much her remarks deformed her, policy would have led, no doubt, to a different expression, although humanity had not taught, nor custom allowed her to possess a better sentiment!" Vol. I. pp. 343, 344.

2. "Unfortunately I am now enabled to speak of the punishment of a slave, which was far more severe than that mentioned in my last letter; and, I am sorry to add, attended with similar marks of insensibility, and want of feeling, on the part of a White female. Happening to call one morning upon a lady at Stabroek, in company with several Europeans who had been my fellow-passengers hither, we were scarcely seated before we heard the clang of the whip, and the painful cries of an unfortunate Black. The lady of the house, more accustomed to scenes of slavery than ourselves, pointing to the spot, as if it were a pleasant sight for strangers, or something that might divert us, asked, with apparent glee, if we saw them '*flogging the Negre!*' Truly we saw the whole too clearly. A poor unhappy slave was stretched out naked, upon the open street, tied down, with his face to the ground, before the fiscal's door; his two legs extended to one stake, his arms strained out, at full length, to two others in form of the letter Y; and, thus secured to the earth, two strong-armed drivers*, placed at his sides, were

"* Slaves so termed from being promoted to the distinguished office of following their comrades, upon all occasions, with a whip at their backs, as an English carter attends his horses."

cutting his bare skin, by turns, with long heavy-lashed whips, which, from the sound, alone, without seeing the blood that followed, conveyed the idea of tearing away pieces of flesh at every stroke." Vol. I. pp. 347—349.

3. "A few days ago I was applied to by the wife of a colonist, to request that I would *make some complaint* to her husband against the slaves of the house, very *humanely* urging as a reason for imposing upon me so *grateful* a task, that she wished *'to get them a good flogging!'* I trust that neither you, nor any of our fair friends, on the European shore of the Atlantic, will condemn my want of gallantry in resisting the solicitation. It was not even contended, that any specific fault had been committed to justify the punishment; but this was *to be invented*, and merely because some idle whim, some fit of caprice, or ill humour had led the mistress of these poor slaves to wish them *'a good flogging!'*" Vol. I. p. 369.

4. "I should stand accused of neglecting our contract, were I to omit telling you that, in a late provision-hunting excursion, our party met two Dutch ladies upon the road, travelling, with great state, in a chaise drawn by six *naked* slaves, instead of horses. This was a scene of novelty, it being one of the toils of slavery which we had not before chanced to witness; nor indeed had we heard that it was practised." Vol. II. p. 283.

## IV. Moral and religious habits.

1. "A word," says our author, "upon the total neglect of sacred ordinances which prevails in these colonies. Knowing that the established religion of the Dutch is Calvinism, you will be much surprised to learn that all the ceremonies of the Sabbath are utterly disregarded. No church or temple is to be found in the settlements; nor have the inhabitants even appropriated any house, or other building, for the performance of Divine service. Neglecting their own duties to the Deity, they have used no means to inculcate a sense of religious awe, or of moral conviction, among the slaves, but have confided the government of these degraded beings solely to terror and the whip. Sunday, it is true, has been set apart as a day of rest, but no solemn ceremony mark it as the Sabbath. Idleness and merriment alone distinguish it from the other days of the week. It is a holiday to the Negroes, but no part of it is devoted to their moral or religious improvement: not one hour is appropriated to instruct them in the duties we all owe to the Creator; or to teach them the principles which ought to govern the conduct of man towards man." Vol. II. p. 131.

2. Some idea may be formed of the very degraded state of moral feeling even among the White inhabitants of the West Indies, from the following fact which Dr. Pinckard records with becoming disgust and astonishment:—

"It is usual, in these colonies, for a person to take a Negro, or more frequently a Mulatto, or *mestee* woman as housekeeper and companion; and, if he have children by her, and cannot afford, or does not choose, to be at the expense of sending them to Europe to be educated, he derives no dishonour from breeding up the sons as mechanics, and giving out the daughters, in keeping, to his friends; and so commonly is this practice established, that no feelings of remorse seem to attach to it: on the contrary, it is deemed the best provision the parent can make for his daughter." Vol. II. p. 136.

And yet a West-Indian planter and merchant of eminence, and a member of the British Parliament, has not scrupled to tell us, in a recent publication, that the laws which have been framed in the West Indies to obstruct the manumission of slaves, were adopted "to discourage" "illicit and vicious connections between White men and Negro or Coloured women!" He must have placed a large reliance on the credulity of the British public, and on their ignorance of West-Indian society, before he could have ventured on so gross a misrepresentation.

The whole term of Dr. Pinckard's residence in the slave colonies subject to Great Britain was only eighteen months. We cannot conclude this Sketch without asking our readers, whether they think it possible that a traveller should have resided in any other civilized portion of the globe, and especially a country subjected to British rule, for so short a time, and yet have been the eye-witness of such a multiplicity and complication of horrors, as were crowded into the period of Dr. Pinckard's West-Indian tour*? And is nothing to be done by the British Parliament, and the British People, to remedy this monstrous state of injustice and oppression?

* See, besides the present Sketch, Sketches I. and III. for farther extracts to the same effect, from this intelligent writer. But it is necessary to peruse the work itself, to have an adequate idea of all the horrors of West-Indian slavery.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No. VI.

## REMARKS

ON THE

## ANTIDOTE TO THE WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES.

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1817.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

SOME gentleman having lately thought it necessary to publish what he calls an Antidote to the West-Indian Sketches, it may not be amiss to make a few observations on the accuracy and candour exhibited in the productions of this advocate for liberality and truth. His accusations against us may be reduced principally to three:—That we are perpetually charging on all the colonists, to the unjust and indiscriminate defamation of their characters, all the atrocious crimes which have at any time been committed by the most inhuman individuals, whom they detest equally with ourselves; and, among the rest, all the tyranny and oppression committed by the Dutch in Guiana, although the harshness of their treatment, and the comparative humanity of the English, are matters of perfect notoriety;—that we have imputed to the present generation the misdeeds of their predecessors twenty or thirty years ago, passing over the intermediate amelioration which has taken place;—and that, still with the same unfairness of intention, we have, by suppressing all the favourable circumstances in Dr. Pinckard's narration, completely reversed the impression of the state of British Colonial Slavery which his history is calculated (whether intended or not) to convey.

On recurring to the former Numbers of the Sketches, the refutation of these charges appears to be anticipated in so great a degree as to prove, that, if this writer has himself read them with any care (which seems scarcely possible), his remarks are intended for such of his friends as have not. With a view to him, therefore, more is scarcely necessary than to refer to the Numbers already published. With a view to others, we add a few words of explanation.

Our antagonist begins—"A small pamphlet, entitled West-Indian Sketches, has lately been disseminated, &c. in order to prejudice the public, &c. against the *whole society* of the West Indies. This is only part of a system that has been long pursued by a few individuals in this country, who, in defiance of truth, *in contradiction to authentic information*, and with unparalleled effrontery, have dared to accuse the colonists of *every crime* their *heated imaginations* could conjure up."

It cannot be denied that the authors of the Sketches are here accused of charging *indiscriminately* and *falsely*, on *all the colonists*, all manner of crimes; such crimes having existence only in their own heated imaginations. Now to the truth; and, in the first place, as to the want of discrimination—

In Sketch No. I. p. 6, a doubt is expressed "whether the temper and feelings of the White population of the West Indies towards the slaves have undergone any marked change." But this doubt, it is added, "refers not to enlightened proprietors residing in this country, nor to various cases of men of enlarged minds and liberal education residing in the Colonies, but to the body of resident Whites."

In Sketch IV. p. 39, it is further remarked:—"It was never intended to exhibit the cruelties of Huggins and Hodge as fair specimens of

the usual course of West-Indian management. On the contrary," &c.

Now what subterfuge is left? In the first of these passages, even the *doubt* as to the temper of the Whites being changed, is not proposed without *discrimination*. In the second, while the cases of Huggins and Hodge establish, beyond contradiction, that within these six or seven years (not twenty), the most enormous cruelties (beyond any which our imaginations, when most heated, would have suggested,) not only might be, but actually were, committed in two separate islands; in one of which the Governor thought himself obliged to adopt vigorous measures to prevent a rescue of the offender; while, in the other—— But let the case speak for itself: it speaks a thousand volumes to those who can feel. And here the most express denial is again given to the intention of representing these as fair specimens of the ordinary course of West-Indian management — unnecessarily indeed, because it is only a repetition, for the hundredth time, of disavowals of the same nature, which have always been made in the speeches and writings of the Abolitionists.

What then are our allegations, which we repeat and maintain? That the state of slavery in the West Indies is attended with such degradation of the Negro, as naturally to produce a treatment of them similar to that of brutes;—that their legal incapacity of giving evidence affords a facility to a master of escaping conviction for almost any act of which he may be guilty towards his slaves;—that, in consequence, they have no security against such a degree of abuse as may be quite sufficient to render them miserable;—that, in fact, such abuses do occur, and that it is no breach of charity or of probability to suppose them frequent. And whatever condemnation of the system, or of the conduct of many individuals, all this may imply, we say that it is pure folly to deny it; that it stands upon the face of the thing, and cannot be otherwise; that the evidence of it, which is adduced in these very Sketches, is incontrovertible; and that the defiance of truth, of authentic information, and, therefore, the effrontery, is all on the side of those who risk the denial. See to these points the communications of Lord Seaforth, of which more hereafter; of Sir William Young; of Governor Prevost, and others; as well as the cases of Huggins and Hodge, &c. which we will not repeat, but desire our readers to refer to them again and again whenever these miserable attempts are made to impose on their understandings. Of Dr. Pinckard we must borrow again, to shew that we have not, either by misquoting or omitting, altered his words, perverted his meaning, or mistated his sentiments. To this purpose it will not be necessary for us to enter into any defence of those extracts which relate only to the planters of Berbice and Demarara. They, it seems, are only Dutchmen, whom our antagonist is ready, and even eager, to sacrifice at the shrine of humanity. But, deferring for the present some observations we shall have to make on this subject, our additional quotations will be chiefly confined to those general censures on the state of slavery, and the society in which it is found, which Dr. Pinckard bestows upon it alike in Guiana and in Barbadoes; while he remarks also, in both, the happy effects of individual humanity, the inefficacy of legal protection, the prevalence of a most liberal hospitality, and the destruction of female delicacy.

To proceed then—We first entreat our readers to refer to the last Sketch, No. V., and, under Head II. "General Treatment," to read the story of the "House Wench;" particularly attending to the following reflections, with which it concludes: "Divested of

every right, a slave has no redress, not even against the bitterest wrongs:—however oppressed, however injured, he has no resource, no means of relief! Not having the power of changing his home, he has no escape from ill usage or cruelty, but is condemned to travel the long journey of life in hopeless discontent!"

Again, in Vol. I. p. 360, Dr. Pinckard, after describing a Negro sale, thus proceeds:—"Silent tears, deep sighs, and heavy lamentations proved the bitter suffering of these poor Blacks, and told that nature was ever true to her feelings. Never was a scene more distressful. Among these unhappy, degraded Africans, scarcely an unclouded countenance could be seen. Every feature was veiled in the gloom of woe; and their grief was poured forth in all the sadness of affliction.

"A host of painful ideas rushed into my mind at the moment; and all the distorted images of this abhorrent traffic presented themselves to my recollection. The many horrors and cruelties which I had so often heard of, appeared in their worst shapes before me; and my imagination was acutely alive to the unmerited punishment sometimes inflicted, the incessant labour exacted, the want of freedom, and all the catalogue of hardships endured by slaves. I endeavoured to combat the effect of these impressions by directing my mind to the opposite images. The kind treatment of Negroes under humane masters occurred to me: I recollected the comfort and harmony of the slaves I had lately seen at 'Profit.' I contemplated their exemption from care, and the many anxieties of the world; and I remembered the happiness and contentment expressed in their songs and merry dances: but all in vain! The repugnant influence would not thus be cheated. With such distress before my eyes, all palliatives were unavailing. The whole was wrong, and not to be justified. I felt that I execrated every principle of the traffic. Nature revolted at it; and I condemned the whole system of slavery, under all its forms and modifications." Vol. I. p. 360.

These two last passages relate to Berbice; and, it is said, give only Dutch manners—notoriously harsh, as the English are as notoriously humane—and, as a triumphant proof of this, it is related * that in the case of the Negro carpenter, (Sketch No. III.), all the English who witnessed the affair went indignantly in a body to the judge, and obtained a promise that justice should be done to the poor injured Negro. Now we are no advocates for the Dutch, and we believe our own countrymen may be better masters; but as an *argument*, what does this story prove? Between whom is the comparison instituted? Doubtless, any one would suppose, between Dutch and English of the same class, and in similar situations;—planters both, at least, if not in the same colony. Would any human being, accustomed to write, read, and reason, imagine that he had made the smallest advance towards proving the superior humanity of the body of English *planters*, by adducing an instance where an English *physician and some officers his companions*, mere visitors in the West Indies, were moved to indignation by the oppression and injustice of a Dutchman towards his slave; this very physician, also, having formed such opinions of slavery as we are about to mention, from what had fallen under his own observation in the British Colonies themselves? Some of the horrid acts which he relates we have already quoted in our Numbers III. and V. and to them we refer our readers; but, attacked as we have been, in self-defence we feel compelled to add

* Antidote, No. III, p. 4.

the following extracts. They respect Barbadoes, the oldest of our Slave Colonies.

"On first making inquiries," says Dr. Pinckard, "respecting the accommodations of the *tavern*, we were surprised to learn their extent, and the facility with which they are attainable. A bed may be had for half a dollar per night, or three dollars per week; and, for an additional sum well understood, the choice of an attendant to draw the curtains."

"It is to the hostess's advantage that the female assistants in her family should be as handsome as she can procure them. Being slaves, the only recompense of their services is the food they eat, the hard bed they sleep on, and the few loose clothes which are hung upon them. One privilege, indeed, is allowed them, which, you will be shocked to know, is that of tenderly disposing of their persons. This offers the only hope they have of procuring a sum of money, wherewith to purchase their freedom: it is so common a resource among them, that neither shame nor disgrace attaches to it; but, on the contrary, she who is most sought, becomes an object of envy, and is proud of the distinction shewn her.

"One of our attendants at table appeared, both from her conversation and behaviour, to be very superior to her degraded station. She had nothing of beauty, nor even prettiness of face; but she was of good figure, and of respectable and interesting demeanour, and, in point of intellect, far above her colleagues. Together with gentleness of manner, and an easy, pleasant address, she possesses a degree of understanding and ability which claims respect. In principle, and in sentiment, she appeared virtuous; and from the frankness of her replies, it was evident that she knew no sense of wrong in her conduct. We could not but lament that the imperious habits of the country did not allow of her being a more respectable member of society.

"This woman is the great support of the house—the bar-maid, and leading manager of the family. Her mistress had refused to take a hundred guineas for her; which, she assured us, had been offered by a gentleman who would have purchased her. She has a very lively interesting little daughter, a Mestee, about four years old. Of this child she spake with great tenderness, and seemed to bear it all the fond attachment of an affectionate parent. Yet, as the infant was born in slavery, should the mother, by any means, obtain her own freedom, she cannot claim her child, but must leave it still the disposable property of her mistress, equally liable to be sold as any other piece of furniture in the house: for, in Barbadoes, the offspring of a woman in slavery becomes the absolute property of the owner to whom the mother belongs, whether it be black, yellow, or white; as the law knows no period when the child of a slave shall be born free, however removed from the African: nor can the mother, under any circumstances of subsequent liberation, claim her infant from its owner, even though it should be of fairer skin than the fairest European. Thus are the natural ties of our species torn asunder, and the dearest attachments and purest affections of the heart cruelly broken down! Babes are separated from their parents, and mothers robbed of their children, by this unnatural appropriation of human substance!" Vol. I. pp. 114—117.

After mentioning certain most indecent practices which are common in the same island of Barbadoes, Dr. Pinckard adds:—

"You will be more shocked, perhaps, than surprised that such-like indecencies should be practised among the slaves; but you will

join in my regret that they should happen before the eyes of European wives, and spinsters; and will lament the sad effect which the frequent recurrence of such offensive exhibitions must, necessarily, have in destroying that modesty and delicacy of sentiment which render so truly lovely, while they so much embellish the female mind." Vol. I. pp. 123, 124.

After mentioning the practice of taking out Negroes on foot to accompany Whites on horseback; his own remonstrances upon it; and the replies of the gentlemen of the island, Dr. Pinckard concludes—"Still our European feelings forced upon us the wish, that either they had been accommodated with mules, or we had dispensed with their attendance; and it will require a much longer residence amidst this new order of things, before we shall be able to persuade ourselves that our sense of disquietude was only a misplaced humanity." Vol. I. p. 163.

"In your future good wishes for the comfort of the poor Africans, forget not to pray that all masters may possess hearts as kind, and humane, as that which beats in the bosom of 'Jack Waith.' The friendly indulgence of the master is amply repaid by the attachment of his slaves; and the history of Mr. Waith and his gang, may stand in everlasting reproach to the self-arrogating opinion which maintains that Negroes know not the Divine sentiment of gratitude, but are most treacherous toward the master who treats them best."

"By kind attentions, and occasional indulgences to his slaves, Mr. Waith had so meliorated their condition, so softened to them *the hardships of slavery*, and so improved their comforts, as to attach them to him, by the secure ties of affection and gratitude. *The loud clang of the whip was seldom heard among them, and the smartings of its painful lash were scarcely dreaded:* for a better principle than fear impelled them to their duty. Their friendship for their master made his interests their own; and their gratitude rendered his safety the object of their solicitude, and even of their lives. Of this he had, in two great instances, known the most unequivocal proof; one when the Negroes of the estates had formed a conspiracy to rise upon their masters; the other upon an alarm being given that the island was attacked by the French! On both these occasions the slaves of Spendlove voluntarily offered to lay down their lives in defence of Mr. Waith and his house." Vol. I. pp. 197—199.

"On attempting to lift a package to their shoulders, the Negroes set about it in an awkward and ludicrous manner. Still as no accident, nor injury of consequence could derive from it, we, who were recently from Europe, were quite diverted at their fruitless and incompetent efforts; but Captain ——, who was with us, *and had resided long enough in the West Indies to have accustomed himself to the arbitrary treatment of slaves*, seeing the stupid way in which they attempted this new task, immediately gave one of the poor fellows a cruel cut, with a large horse-whip, across the face and eyes! We remonstrated with him on this unnecessary and unmerited severity; and could not but mark it, in our minds, as an act of wanton cruelty." Vol. I. p. 273, 274.

"The state of the Negroes in Barbadoes varies, as the state of slaves must ever do, according to the dispositions and circumstances of the master. Under such humane and benevolent characters as Mr. Waith, and others whom we have visited, their situation might be envied by the poor of European nations! But under severe and cruel masters it becomes a state of ceaseless vexation and misery." Vol. I. pp. 294, 295.

"The first specimen of West-In-

dia slaves which met our observation was singularly calculated to impress us with sentiments of compassion and disgust. It occurred at the very moment, too, when the impression would be most powerful, and consequently it will remain indelible. Immediately on our coming to anchor in Carlisle Bay, a woman appeared alongside the ship in a small boat, with some bad fruit, tobacco, salt fish, and other articles of traffic. She was rowed by two Negroes, who were her slaves. Two such objects of human form and human misery had never before met our eyes! They were feeble, meagre, and dejected—half-starved, half-naked, and, in figure, too accurately resembling hungry and distempered greyhounds! They crouched upon their heels and haunches in the boat; their bones almost pierced their filthy and eruptive skins; their wasted frames trembled with debility; and, while their hollow eyes and famished countenances rendered them ghastly images of horror, their whole appearance shocked humanity, and appalled the sight! Are these, we exclaimed, what are called slaves? Is this the state to which human beings are reduced in bondage? Afflicting and cruel indeed! Well may slavery be deemed a curse! Can it be possible that these spectres once were men? Are such the objects we are to see? Are these the wretched and deplorable beings who are to appear every day, and every hour, before our eyes? Forbid it humanity! Forbid it Heaven! Such was the apostrophe of the moment, and I feel a sincere gratification in being able to inform you, that the melancholy subjects of this first impression were not correct examples of the general mass of slaves. Still it is grievous that any such should be seen: but we hope to find them only rare instances, for we learn that the large gangs of Negroes kept by the great merchants, and the planters, are generally treated with kindness and humanity, and appear contented and in comfort.

"It is easy to distinguish the slaves of the opulent and respectable inhabitants from those of the poor and needy people of the town. The latter, being in poverty themselves, can only give to their Negroes a scanty allowance of food, while their indigence induces them to exact an over-proportion of labour. Hence the slaves of this class of people appear too often with sharp bones and hungry sallow countenances, having eruptions about the body, and their skins of an unhealthy hue. Their general appearance indeed is dirty and unwholesome, and strikingly marks their neglected state. Want and wretchedness are deeply stamped in every line of their persons; and they may not inaptly be said to resemble the worn out horse or the starved and jaded ass, too often seen trembling under a heavy burden, or reeling in an old tattered cart, upon the roads of England." Vol. I. pp. 296—298.

Is not this the evident result of the state of slavery—and PRECISELY analogous to the condition of brute animals under different classes of masters in free countries? But once more:

"Perhaps nature has not formed, nor can the human mind conceive, a being at once so disgusting, and so pitiable, as an old half-famished Negro woman, of withered frame, hobbling about with her loose and naked skin hanging shrivelled in deep-furrowed wrinkles; and dragging after her one or both legs grown into an immense bulk of hideous disease—her feet only toes, protruding from this huge mass of distempered leg! Yet such are the objects too often seen upon the streets of Bridge-town!" Vol. I. p. 308.

Other passages might be cited exactly to the same purport; but we think we have produced enough to shew the disingenuousness of the man who, presuming to

reproach the Sketches as unfair, has himself perverted the whole tenor of Dr. Pinckard's observations;—enough to justify the appeal to any man of common candour, whether we did not fairly state the impressions on Dr. Pinckard's mind, and which pervade his book, to have been produced not merely by the inhumanity of the Dutch colonists, but by the general state of Society as it respects the Negroes in those parts of the West Indies, Dutch or English, which he visited;—and whether this impression be not, that the alleviations of slavery are all dependent on the character of the individual master, while the evils are radically inherent in the system itself. No man can read his book with attention without perceiving this:—but it is peculiarly observable, that the two most prominent instances of Negro comfort, from which our antagonist would palm upon the public his general conclusions, are expressly stated to have been out of the common road. We have not forgotten or overlooked the passage on which so much stress is laid, (Antidote, No. I. p. 5.); "The sum of gratification afforded by this delightful excursion," &c.: but we maintain, that it does not destroy the importance of Dr. Pinckard's testimony against the system of slavery, but on the contrary, by shewing his freedom from prepossessions, adds to its weight; and this is all our concern. Dr. Pinckard made a tour through an island naturally delightful, in agreeable company, who did all in their power to amuse and entertain him. He was treated with the greatest hospitality, and therefore of course inclined to think and speak well of his hosts. He met with individuals whom he states as being more than usually kind to their Negroes*. It is natural that he should speak of such an excursion as "gratifying and delightful:" but does all this reconcile him to *slavery?* No. Does it impress on his mind that the legal situation of the slaves is what it ought to be? No. Dr. Pinckard had too much sagacity not to mark, and too much humanity not to deplore, the difference between the insecure tenure of any good dependent on the will of an absolute master, and the security arising out of the sanctions of a well-defined law, with proper rules of evidence, and impartially administered. To attempt to confound these two things, or to represent the difference between them as slight or unimportant, is weak or wicked in the extreme; betraying either the most pitiable ignorance of the indispensable requisites to human happiness, or a highly reprehensible indifference to their being withheld from myriads of our fellow-men. That acting, or even arguing and thinking, systematically in this way, has the unfortunate but certain tendency to deprave the human heart, we shall not waste our readers' time in attempting to prove; though this our Antidotist may probably deny; for it is only supported by the uniform doctrine of every moralist, and by all experience from the days of Homer to our own. We may, perhaps, hereafter observe a little on the illustration of this principle, in one or two striking instances.

"Oh, but all these facts are Dutch, and twenty years old." We have already undeniably shewn, that Dr. Pinckard's opinions on this subject were not drawn from sources exclusively Dutch; and we now proceed to observe, that (omitting, at present, any reference to the cases communicated by Lord Seaforth, while Governor of Barbadoes,) those of Huggins and Hodge are neither twenty years old nor ten,

* "Under such benevolent and humane characters as Mr. Waith and many others, whom we have visited, their situation might be envied by the poor of nations where freedom is better known. But under severe and cruel masters it becomes a state of ceaseless vexation and misery." Vol I. p. 295.

and may yet fairly challenge pre-eminence in their line. But from whence do we derive the certainty that this prodigious and boasted improvement in the West Indian system has taken place? We have been told, that though Hodge was suspected, "nobody knew where testimony could be procured of his guilt." How truth will burst out! *We* maintain, that for want of the admission of slave evidence, the slave is never secure that any law in his favour will be executed; and for this we are reviled and abused. Now, it appears, that this infamous wretch, whose memory deserves to be gibbeted to all posterity, (but who appears yet to have some secret friend interested for his reputation), had for a series of years indulged his cruelty to the uttermost, destroying the miserable victims of his passions by the most deliberate barbarities, before any individual was able to substantiate an accusation against him, in an island containing 8 or 900 White inhabitants only. Admitting, then, that these inhabitants were really in earnest in their wishes to detect him, how decisive a proof it affords of the facility of concealing the most abominable atrocities, even though issuing in death!

We observe farther, that 25 years ago the same authorities which now testify to the happiness of slaves, then gave the same account; equally denied the existence of ill-treatment; —equally maintained their situation to be preferable to that of the majority of the European poor, and the inutility of the interference of this country either to regulate their conveyance, or to secure to them legal protection, *because* "the interest of the owner," that omnipotent principle of action, was so safely to be relied on for affording them every comfort, as to preclude the necessity for any other provision. We are now told of the laws since passed, the improvements since made, &c. &c. But simply referring to what we have said above about evidence, we would ask, what has been done to remedy *this* defect;—a defect so important, in the opinion of Sir William Young, (an hereditary planter and an opposer of the abolition), as to render the best laws a mere dead letter for the protection of the slaves? What has been done in Barbadoes for their security, we have no difficulty in telling. The murder of a slave there had remained from the beginning punishable by a fine of 11*l.* 4s. Lord Seaforth, when he was Governor, proposed the abrogation of this disgraceful law, and the enactment of a proper punishment—death. The dignity of Barbadian plantership treated this proposal as an insulting and dangerous interference of a European Governor with their rights; and the majority of the "*General Assembly* of Barbadoes," consisting of *eleven* persons! rejected it!— And so the law stood for some years longer, when, in 1805 (nine years after Dr. Pinckard's visit), to kill a slave "wilfully," "maliciously," "wantonly," AND "WITHOUT PROVOCATION," was made murder. But observe, that although the preamble of the Act expressly states; "Whereas the penalties directed by the several acts of this island against the murder of Negro slaves, *have been found inadequate;*" thereby annihilating the pretence that the mildness of Barbadoes manners, *(aided by the penalty of* 11*l.* 4s.*)* was a sufficient protection for slaves against being murdered; yet, that they might not, we suppose, grow too "proud and saucy" on this immense boon, the words "*without provocation*" were inserted, by which it is perfectly obvious that the whole provision was rendered nugatory. Not to ask how many murders are any where committed without some provocation, we are yet to learn what act almost of a Negro towards a White may not be construed into a provocation. Dr. Pinckard in-

forms us, that a Barbadian who, without any provocation, had struck a Negro a violent blow on the head with a large stick, on his remonstrating against this and other ill usage, threatened him, "if he looked savage," *i. e.* if he *provoked* the White by looking savage, "*to cut him down.*" Any act of disobedience is provocation; and this act is to be described by perhaps the master only, or another White in his service;—the master's life being, on the trial, staked against that of an animal recently valued at 11*l.* 4*s.*! and Negro evidence being, as ever, inadmissible!

The Assembly of Barbadoes, however, it seems, are likely to take up this subject again. It is to be hoped, for the sake of the English name, and of human nature, that in the great and respectable Assembly of Barbadoes, which met to the number of NINETEEN persons, in order to reject Lord Seaforth's proposal, by a majority of 3, (11 to 8), there will now be found an unanimous disposition not to allow murder to be committed with impunity, on the plea of provocation; perhaps of "looking sulky!"

In Demarara and Berbice, which have been English governments for upwards of 20 years, and are now English colonies, we know (indeed, the Antidotist we apprehend would admit) that the old and mischievous prejudices remain in full force; and though many of the planters are of what we suppose he would call "the true Dutch breed," yet Mr. Fiscal Jenyns is, we fear, an Englishman—and we know his deliberate opinion, held forth to all the planters, Dutch as well as English, to be, that the power of the master over his Negroes is not to be brought into doubt or even DISCUSSION. Mark, reader! not into *discussion*. How that authority is to be limited which is not to be discussed, let Mr. Justice Jenyns, or his flatterer, explain. But he says farther, "It should never be *opposed*, or even *thwarted*, by any intermediate authority." So that, on "the delightful sentiments" and principles "of an English judge*," thus publicly avowed, if the horrid scenes at Lancaster (see Sketch, No. V.) had been renewed under his own eye when *he* was judge, he must have been guilty of a breach of duty had he opposed, or even thwarted, the monster who was flogging to death the two miserable victims whom he had just caught. Now, we will confidently ask, would such an opinion have been given but to men well prepared to receive it? Is this necessary for the maintenance of the slavery system? If it be, let its defenders stand forth and say so; but let them ponder well the consequences:—if not, let Mr. Justice Jenyns defend himself.—The British Government calls loudly for additional restrictions on this authority of the master. The legislature of Jamaica, and of Barbadoes, seem prepared to enact them. Nay, the laws, for ameliorating the state of slavery, which at any time have been passed in any of the islands, fly in the face of Mr. Jenyns's opinion; unless, indeed, he will defend these imprudent colonial legislatures, by alleging with Governor Prevost, with the legal defenders of Mr. Hodge, &c. &c. (and as there has been but too much reason to believe true), that those laws were never meant to be executed, but merely to blind the mother country. But Mr. Jenyns has met with an appropriate defender, just where we should have expected, in the person whose regard for "Christian charity" leads him to desire that the ashes of ARTHUR HODGE should rest in peace! True—and why not of Nero and Caligula too? They have been longer dead. We neither wonder at such a person's praise of Mr. Justice Jenyns, nor at his finding sufficient ground for adulation where we can see nothing but contemptible prejudice, or a drivelling

* Antidote, No. III. p. 5.

and affected morality still more contemptible. Mr. Jenyns, this guardian of the weak, this administrator of law and justice, after deprecating the interference of the law or the magistrate between an arbitrary master and a defenceless slave (which the British Parliament recommends and enjoins), most magnanimously *scruples not*—dares—to "admonish" masters "that there are natural and social obligations," "mutual relations, and reciprocal duties," "from which they can never deviate without dishonour." Did Mr. Justice Jenyns promulgate these delightful and sublime sentiments to shew the world how deeply he was read in the most recondite mysteries of morality? Or did he think it necessary thus to instruct, or, if he pleases, to *admonish* the ADULT *planters* of Berbice and Demarara? If the latter—to be serious, could he think that persons standing in need of such admonitions were fit to be trusted with unlimited power over other men, not to be *opposed, thwarted*, no nor even *discussed?* And this from a judge! and to be praised for it by a *man!* We really envy not these gentlemen their mutual connection, of which we cannot help surmising that they have a pretty strong common bond. Indeed, when we attend to the style of these Antidotes; their characteristic malignity, and the objects against whom it is directed; the cunning with which unimportant mistakes are spied out, exaggerated and dilated on, while not one leading or liberal principle of religion or morals, or even one comprehensive maxim of government on which the decision of such a question must turn, is ever made the subject of discussion, scarcely even adverted to*; and the total disregard of truth, if falsehood has the smallest chance of answering a momentary purpose; we feel tolerably assured that the Antidote can have but one author.

We shall now, for the present, take our leave of Dr. Pinckard, and with him, of the first and third Numbers of the Antidote. On the second, relating to Sir James Leith's supposed Aid-de-Camp, there are obvious reasons why we should not enter just at this moment; but none why we should not challenge the writer of the note at the foot of No. III. p. 3. gravely and deliberately to repeat his accusation, that the Directors of the African Institution "*invented*" that "calumny." Be it a calumny—as false and as black as he shall choose to describe it; be the African Institution ever so blameable for circulating it; we, without hesitation, defy him to declare, on whatever of character he may possess, that he believes the assertion he has there so unequivocally made. We know that we have no right to call on him to disclose himself; and that an anonymous writer, who can make any assertion, incurs very little farther risk by professing his readiness to give it the additional sanction of an oath;—but we have charged, we do again charge, this person with a wilful and systematic disregard to truth; and we are willing to put it to this issue. He must be known to his bookseller, and probably is known to many gentlemen (to some at least) of his own way of thinking. Now let him make an oath, or a solemn declaration in writing signed with his name (the receipt of which his friends shall

* We do not dignify with such a designation his vague, vulgar, and absurd rant, about jacobins, and fanatics, and enthusiasts, and methodists, and missionaries, and hypocrites, and impostors, and innovators, and revolutionists, and intentional encouragers of insurrection, rebellion, and murder, and destruction of the colonies;—he is perfectly welcome to all these polemical howls. "Every animal has its cry." As for the Methodists, when any specific and intelligible charge shall be made against them, they will doubtless defend themselves.

acknowledge without divulging his name) that he does really and *bonâ fide* believe his own assertions, and we will give up the point; and, though we cannot promise to believe him, or that any one else will, we do promise never to accuse him again. Whether he will do this or not, having called his attention to the point, we are perfectly ready to leave his credit to his own keeping. We once more repeat, that his account of Dr. Pinckard is best refuted by reading Dr. Pinckard; and his representations of the Tortola affair (in Number IV. just published) we should be perfectly contented to leave to the castigation of Governor Elliot's own letters. Should we hereafter notice them, it will only be because those letters are not in the hands of every one.

But after all, these accusations and recriminations, were they equally just on both sides, are little better than trifling, and serve rather to put aside, than to bring forward, the main question. Let every thing, in the treatment of the slaves, for which the Antidotist is disposed to contend be granted;—the Negroes of Mr. Dougan or Mr. Hollingworth, or twenty others, as happy as he would describe them, the general treatment mild, the labour exacted moderate, and instances of abuse rare—what is the happiness which, after all, and in the most favoured circumstances, they are represented to enjoy? Precisely that of a favoured animal in this country, well fed, well housed, well clothed;—but then, on the other hand, liable to be worked at the master's discretion very slenderly controuled; to be punished at the same discretion for any fault, real or imaginary, up to a point quite sufficient to render his life miserable; to be transferred to another spot, or sold, at the master's will, whatever ties of inclination or of nature may be thereby broken; and if indulged with a wife, her offspring to be the absolute property of the master. Is one word of this denied? All is contained in the rights of ownership, so perpetually and pertinaciously maintained and contended for, not merely over the slaves in existence, but over their issue to the latest posterity. Nor do the restrictions on masters, introduced into the most modern and best constructed acts, even supposing they could be fully and efficaciously enforced up to the very letter, secure good treatment to the slave, to say nothing of the innumerable methods, within the law, by which he may be made perpetually wretched without redress. And if a master chooses to go beyond the law, but with caution, how is he to be convicted? Be it ever remembered, the slave is no evidence, *except against his fellow-slave.* Nay, let it even be supposed, for example, that the law which says that a slave shall not be punished with more than thirty-nine lashes at one time, by the master, or his order, could be enforced; yet who, within thirty-nine, determines the number? The master. Who ascertains the delinquency? The master. Who prescribes the degree of severity? The master. Who decides how soon the punishment may be repeated? The master. Even in the last Jamaica Act we do not find any provision for setting a slave free from the severest master, except at the discretion of the court *only* in *atrocious cases of mutilation.* In others, the complaining slave, however successful in establishing his injury, and even convicting his master, is to be necessarily redelivered into the power of the exasperated tyrant, whose former ill usage drove him to complain. Is this a danger lightly to be incurred? But when we take one step farther, and inquire into the evidence which the colonial laws afford of their moral estimation, what find we? No doubt those who desire to have their dependants honest, sober, virtuous, are careful to have them instructed in correspondent principles. Those who complain of the

savageness of their nature and habits are anxious, by all imaginable means, to correct and amend such habits, and to diminish the disposition to indulge them. Those who are panting to increase the population of their estates enact laws for the encouragement of marriage, for the protection of the chastity of the women, and discountenance to the uttermost, by precept and example, that corruption and profligacy of manners which they represent as one of the most formidable impediments to it. The traces of this solicitude will surely appear in the code of each island, and must ever have done so; because they have every where been always devoutly wishing for this consummation! Alas, what a wide blank here presents itself! And yet it is not permitted to us to doubt either the perfect sincerity, or the earnestness, with which the work of ameliorating the condition of the slaves has been prosecuted by the colonists and their legislative assemblies!

But we must reserve this particular subject for a future Sketch; being desirous, at present, of briefly noticing the charges with which the author of the Antidote, in common with many of his associates, has loaded the Missionaries who have engaged in the Christian instruction of the slave population in the colonies. Those charges we would meet by citing a strong and recent testimony in proof of the beneficial effect of their labours, the competency of which the Antidotist will not question—we mean that of the House of Assembly of Antigua.

The island of Antigua is the British colony where attempts to instruct the Negroes in Christianity have met with the greatest success. There are, in that island, both Moravian and Methodist Missions of great extent and long standing; and the number of Christian slaves belonging to the two denominations forms a very great proportion of the total Black population of the colony.

On the 25th of July last, the House of Assembly of that island presented an Address to the Governor, in which, after expressing their concurrence in some measures recommended by his Excellency for the greater efficiency of the militia force, they add the following words:—

"We feel it our duty, notwithstanding, to observe to your Excellency, that we have never hitherto had occasion to indulge any serious apprehensions in regard to the slave population of this island, but, on the contrary, have every reason to believe, that the lenity and kind treatment which they experience from their respective proprietors leave them but little room for discontent; and that *did any such feeling unhappily exist, the increasing influence of moral and religious principles among them would effectually prohibit any rash or desperate attempts.*"

The sentiments expressed by his Excellency, in reply, are also well deserving of notice:—

"The obligations of duty are, no doubt, greatly strengthened and enforced by the sanctions of morality and religion; and I hail with heart-felt satisfaction the progressive diffusion of their mild and benignant principles. They cannot fail, when generally disseminated, to give you a strong guarantee of the obedience, fidelity, and gratitude of those under your protection and controul; and no occasion shall pass unimproved by me, to extend their influence, and consolidate *your security*, by enlarging the circle of *their social virtues*."

These proceedings had their origin in the unhappy insurrection which lately occurred in the island of Barbadoes; the same circumstance which has given rise to the misrepresentations respecting the Missionaries, to which we have adverted. To those misrepresentations they present a confutation so complete, that it is quite unnecessary to add a single word to it.

Such, however, is the power of prejudice, that in Jamaica the Missionaries who are labouring to bring about the same effects which the Assembly of Antigua, speaking from their knowledge and experience of the fact, admit to have been so beneficial to the slaves of that island, are represented as being the mere fire-brands of society. The following is a charge delivered to a grand jury at Titchfield, in the island of Jamaica, on the 11th of July last:—

"Mr. Foreman and Gentlemen,—An evil of much magnitude has for some time existed in this parish, and which appears to be daily gaining ground, to the prejudice of good order, and subversive of the subordination, and injurious to the morals of the slave population. I need scarcely inform you, that I allude to the nocturnal visitation of idle, itinerant, and *pretended preachers* of the Gospel on estates, who, by fraud and stratagem, under the cloak of religion, seduced from those hours consigned by nature to repose, the weak and infatuated dupes of their *fraudful designs*, imposed upon their uninformed and credulous understandings, by impiously pretending to preach the holy Gospel. To this evil, gentlemen, it is my duty to direct your attention: but mistake me not. Far be it from me, indeed, to offer any obstacle to the *true exercise of religious worship*. Quite the contrary—for if there be one function more important than another, I am of opinion it is that of training the mind to truth, and of inculcating the knowledge of a future state, thereby to rescue it from the shame, the degradation, and the misery of vice, as well as to promote its temporal and eternal welfare, by impressing it with the knowledge of a merciful God, with the hope of future reward, and with the fear of future punishment *. I would ask you, gentlemen, can the genuine knowledge of the doctrine of salvation be taught by these *illiterate fanatics*, who *profanely pretend* to teach the holy Scriptures? I think not; and it becomes the duty of every magistrate, and it is incumbent on every member of the community, to endeavour to put down such a *monstrous and unlawful assumption* of the functions belonging to the Reverend Ministers of our religion; an evil which threatens much danger, whereby the minds of the hearers are perverted with *false, mistaken*, and *fanatical* notions, and an opportunity afforded them of concerting *private and public mischief*. Who, gentlemen, can know—who can define the characters, or testify the *qualifications* and *real intentions*, of those *unlicensed itinerants?* May they not be (I do not say they are) the most *contemptible hypocrites* of the lowest class, with religion and piety upon their lips, and the basest passions rankling in their hearts? May they not be *wretched ill disposed enthusiasts*, inflaming and alienating the minds of their hearers from their duties and employments, destructive of their health, and creating a discontent, (before unknown) to that state of life in which it has pleased God to place them? Who, gentlemen, can tell where evils like these may stop, unless checked by the arm of *justice?* Who can calculate, in a community like this, where the mass of the Black population is credulous and superstitious—who can calculate the baneful influenc which may be obtained over their minds by those *designing hypocritical impostors*, if we look calmly on, and heedlessly permit the uninterrupted exercise of their pernicious arts? These arts must, indeed, be checked; but with temperance, moderation, and firmness. Theory and experience con-

* And what are the means the gentlemen of Jamaica have provided, either now or heretofore, for thus instructing their slaves? Literally none, except in a very few instances.

vince us fully of the impolicy of their continuance: they must, therefore, be discouraged. And I trust, gentlemen, by your wise interference in your public capacity here, and in your private capacity at your respective homes, you will laudably and prudently contribute your share to the extinction of those vicious pursuits which threaten the peace and safety of this and the sister parishes."

We refer this gentleman of Jamaica to his brethren of Antigua for an answer to his inquiries, and for the means of correcting his theory and improving his experience on this subject. In the mean time, we boldly challenge the Antidotist to produce a single well-authenticated instance, in which any Moravian or Methodist Missionary has been detected in concerting or promoting either public or private mischief in the West Indies, or where his public and private instructions have not been calculated to promote peace and subordination among the slaves.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No VII.

FURTHER REMARKS

OCCASIONED BY THE

ANTIDOTE TO THE WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES.

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1817.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

In our last Number, we directed the notice of our readers to a set of pamphlets, in size and type exact imitations of our own, entitled "Antidote to the West-Indian Sketches;" and we shewed, in a variety of instances, how some of the worst artifices of controversy had been employed, to divert the public attention from those plain fundamental facts which demonstrate the unexampled iniquity of the West-Indian system. In giving publicity to these facts, we felt assured, that the hearts and understandings of our readers would supply the unavoidable inferences from them. We did not indeed anticipate the approbation of the Colonial Agents or their employers, and we are neither surprised nor grieved that we have failed to obtain it. They shrink, and with sufficient reason, from the test which has thus been offered of the real merits of the dispute. It is more consistent with their policy to fight the battle on other grounds; to revive refuted calumnies, and to reiterate invectives, which, whether well or ill-founded, can never disprove the fatal accusations advanced against the colonial system.

In having selected this publication, from the numerous list of pamphlets which have appeared on the same side of the question during the last year, for a particular reply, we may be thought to give a better proof of discretion than of valour; yet its recent date, and the assiduity with which it has been circulated, seem to entitle it to a preference. We would acknowledge, indeed, and respect, in general, the privileges of weakness, although in this instance we may be thought to disregard them.

Many winters have passed over our heads since the commencement of the great controversy respecting ill-fated Africa and her sons; and in those years many lessons have been impressed on our memories. Among these we number a steady persuasion of the ultimate triumph of truth and justice, and a calm conviction that unmerited obloquy is the certain but transitory recompense of persevering opposition to great national crimes. Derision and reproach, if they are not the unfailing evidence of eminent desert, are at least its almost inseparable attendants; and they perform a salutary office in counteracting the natural vanity of the heart and probing its sincerity. The West-Indian party have at all times, and never more than at present, subjected their opponents to this trial. The errors committed in the conduct of their cause—errors which it is hardly consistent with human imperfection wholly to avoid; —the inaccuracies of expression into which they may have fallen in the eager pursuit of their great object, the careless language of friendly intercourse; and even the transactions of private life, have been dragged into public notice, exaggerated, and mistated, with all the keenness of vindictive enmity. But they may safely appeal to the dispassionate judgment of their country for their vindication; and experience may instruct them that its approbation—that just reward of

upright public service—will not be withheld, because, in their arduous struggle against oppression, supported by wealth and influence, they may occasionally have fallen into errors consistent with honest intentions, and with conduct essentially judicious and wise.

To all the personal abuse of the writer of the Antidote, as well as of others, we shall be content to oppose these general remarks. Let him continue with his harsh and feeble note to swell the dissonant chorus of his fellows: it is a cry which at once proves his vindictiveness and his impotence. We pity the man who knows so little of the resolute self-devotion of patriotism and humanity, as to hope that such attacks as these will deter any, who have embarked in this cause, from its strenuous and persevering prosecution.

The first of our Sketches was taken from the work of Dr. Pinckard, and described a transaction to which it is needless to apply any epithets, for human language is not furnished with terms by which such enormities can be adequately expressed. The scene of this tragedy was Demarara. It occurred very shortly before the conquest of that settlement by Great Britain in 1796. We expressly stated the date of this transaction, because that was a fact of which our readers might not otherwise have been apprized. We did not state, in terms, that Demarara had been a Dutch colony, because we supposed that none, who might peruse our work, could be ignorant of that fact. The author of the Antidote has formed a lower estimate of the attainments of his readers. He, therefore, thinks it proper to inform them, in capital letters, that Demarara was a DUTCH colony, governed by DUTCH laws, calling upon them to observe with what "insidious and wilful obliquity" the Sketch applies this scene "to the present existing state of society and feelings in our ENGLISH colonies."

But is not Demarara *now* an ENGLISH colony, inhabited by many of the same generation of men who were concerned in this frightful transaction? Was it not to many of these very men that Mr. Jenyns, the ENGLISH judge of that colony, addressed his famous letter, in which he deprecated, in the strongest terms, the smallest interference with the authority of the master? And was it of no moment to warn the British Parliament and the British Public from being so far deceived by the representations of this judicial functionary, as to leave our eighty or ninety thousand fellow-subjects in Guiana to the tender mercies of such men? Even our apologist, adopting the language of Mr. Brougham, testifies of them, that "of all nations in the West Indies, they are the most inhuman masters." (No. I. p. 4.) And then adds, triumphantly, "It is not to Dutch proprietors, but to English humanity, that our slaves are entrusted." But we say, in reply, that it is, according to his own averment, to Dutch proprietors, distinguished for cruelty, and to the operation of Dutch laws, that the destinies of the slaves of Demarara and Berbice are entrusted; and it was partly to establish the criminality of reposing such a trust in such men that the Sketch was written.

We supposed that no one, who admitted the facts of the case—and this writer does not dispute them—could have missed the lesson they were intended to teach. Our opponent, however, is either obstinate and will not, or he labours under a still heavier infirmity and cannot, understand the reasoning he reviles. For the sake of this author, and of such as may resemble him, we will explain more fully the conclusions we sought to establish, by exhibiting, in conjunction with

the oppressions practised in British colonies, the loathsome picture of the manners of the Dutch.

But we must first request our antagonist to prosecute still further the profound researches on which he has entered. It is much, doubtless, to have discovered that Demarara *was* a Dutch settlement. But still deeper inquiry may inform him, that, though previous to the year 1796 it was subject to Holland, it contained, even at that time, a large body of English proprietors. And should he pursue his West-Indian studies with the same acuteness which has led to his first great discovery, he will find, that, among the tragedies related by Dr. Pinckard as having been acted in Demarara, some of the most awful took place on an estate which, we have been credibly informed, was even then occupied by an Englishman.

To return, however, to our promised explanation—Since the nations of Europe first assumed their present intellectual superiority over the rest of mankind, they have been exalted as much by humanity as by their power and civilization. The causes of this moral greatness, and of some partial departures from it, are beside our present purpose. But on the shores of Africa and tropical America, and throughout the whole chain of the Antilles, the European character has established no such claims to admiration. The natives of Christendom have, without distinction, been known, in these regions, only as the messengers of sorrow and desolation. They have swept away from these beautiful islands one entire species of the human race. They have torn from Africa many millions of wretched captives, to supply the place of their first victims. Whole generations of these unhappy sufferers have successively followed the fate of their more feeble predecessors, while Africa has continually supplied fresh cargoes of her sons and daughters to fill the frightful void which European avarice has thus been as continually producing in the creation of God. Among the fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand Negroes who now cultivate the different European settlements in the West Indies, (the residue of at least five times that number, who have been transported thither from Africa during the last 200 years), comparatively few will be found who can shew a Creole descent of more than one or two generations.

In this dreadful series of crimes, the natives of England, France, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal, and those of the United States, have participated, most of them very largely; and the present race of Europeans still more deeply than their fathers, and in defiance of light and knowledge to which their fathers had not access. This general fact is, alas! beyond the reach of controversy. Our children's children will look back to it with horror; and well may we shudder at the recollection. Nor can the press be ever more usefully employed than in fixing the public attention, not in general merely, but in detail, on this darkest passage in the history of mankind. Against the Slave Trade itself there will never be wanting multitudes in this land who will unite with us in protesting, so long as that abomination digraces the world we inhabit. Against the colonial system, which the Slave Trade has generated, and for the support of which it is still by some nations carried on, we will also continue to raise our voice, until its enormities shall be fully understood and appreciated by our countrymen. Now, in every delineation of this system, it is of the utmost moment to mark the identity of its features, among nations who have scarcely any other institutions in common. If it was in the English colonies only, or in the Dutch colonies only, that these ferocious cruelties were per-

petrated, some defect in the colonial code of that particular nation, or in its administration, might be assigned as the cause. But when we find that the Dutch, the French, the Portuguese, the English, the Spaniards, both on the African coast and in the West Indies, assume on this subject one common character; that the crimes of Tortola, Barbadoes, Nevis, &c. find their parallel in the Brazils, in Dutch Guiana, in Martinique, in the Mauritius, in Cuba; the similarity of guilt indicates some common principle to which it is to be referred. However differing in laws, descent, manners, and religion, the colonists of France, England, Holland, &c. wonderfully concur in their general estimate and treatment of their unhappy bondsmen. There is, therefore, under all its minor modifications, some general evil which pervades the general system of the European slave colonies; and it is only from the discovery and cure of this evil that any effectual relief can be expected.

Such was one of the inferences which we conceived would naturally have been drawn by our readers, from the promiscuous introduction of instances of oppression occurring in Dutch, French, and English colonies. And had we been required to point out the common principles which can thus harden alike the hearts of these different colonists, our answer would have been easy. Fear, avarice, and pride, are passions which are, each singly, of force, when they rule the bosom with absolute sway, to bring to light the most hateful propensities of our nature. When united, and entrusted with unlimited dominion, they are capable of converting men into fiends.—The West-Indian colonists dread their slaves; and all history proves to us, that fear is one of the most cruel passions of the human mind, and renders its subjects strangers to remorse and mercy. In the eager pursuit of wealth, too, selfishness (witness the whole history of the new world) operates under its most active and malignant form; and where adequate restraints are wanting, he who is possessed of this fatal spirit regards his fellow creatures as his instruments or his rivals—as instruments to be employed without justice or pity, or as rivals to be subdued by craft or terror. But pride, the ruling passion of our common nature, is of all our passions the most destructive of the sympathy and compassion which ought to alleviate the sorrows of life. He who lives under its dominion is happy in proportion to the distance between himself and other men. Their humiliation constitutes his greatness, and his own imaginary dignity is increased by the contrast. Is it denied that the colonists of the West Indies are justly included in this humiliating delineation? Will our apologist argue, that they form a bright exception to the general rule? Some of their most vaunted writers have spoken of the Negro race as an inferior species. Mr. Long, the historian of Jamaica, is even argumentative on the subject; and in colonial societies at this very day, we are well assured that the same language is openly and confidently held. In Antigua, for instance, to mark the depth of this feeling (a feeling by no means confined to Antigua), the bodies of these outcasts, nay, even of free People of Colour, must not be interred near the sacred ashes of White men, but must be laid in the place allotted to felons.

To the operation, then, of the passions of fear, avarice, and pride, we refer as the solution of this problem. Nor do we give this as a picture of West-Indians only, but of human nature universally, when placed in circumstances equally disadvantageous. In support of its accuracy, we would cite every page of authentic history in every age and nation of the world.

Wherever these passions are called into powerful action, unrestrained by prompt and adequate external authority, whether it be in the West Indies or elsewhere, their influence will blast the peace and happiness of society.

It was not, then, from "insidious and wilful obliquity" that we applied the scene acted in Demarara, "to the existing state of society and feeling in our English colonies." It served to shew that such transactions were not confined to English colonies*; to prove that their cause was to be found not in the peculiar circumstances of any settlement, but in the common and general constitution of all; and thus to probe the mischief to the quick, with a view to ascertain its appropriate remedy.

We have already hinted at a further object which we had in relating, on Dr. Pinckard's authority, this and other instances of Dutch inhumanity. Demarara and Berbice are now become English colonies; and, taken together, they are second in importance to none

* We concluded that all our readers were familiar with a similar tragedy formerly acted in an English colony, and related with singular *sang froid* by Mr. Bryan Edwards, in his History of Jamaica. In the year 1760, a rebellion broke out in that island on two adjoining estates in the parish of St. Mary's; the one belonging to the late Mr. Ballard Beckford, and the other to the author's own uncle, Mr. Bayly. "On these plantations," he observes, "were upwards of 100 Gold Coast Negroes newly imported, and I do not believe that an individual amongst them had received the least shadow of ill treatment from the time of their arrival there. Concerning those on the Friendly estate, I can pronounce of my own knowledge that they were under the government of an overseer of singular tenderness and humanity. His name was Abraham Fletcher; and let it be remembered, in justice even to the rebels, and as a lesson to other overseers, that his life was spared from respect to his virtues. The insurgents had heard of his character from the other Negroes, and suffered him to pass through them unmolested. This fact appeared in evidence. Having collected themselves in a body about one o'clock in the morning, they proceeded to the fort at Port Maria, killed the sentinel, and provided themselves with as great a quantity of arms and ammunition as they could conveniently dispose of. Being by this time joined by a number of their countrymen from the neighbouring plantations, they marched up the high road that led to the interior parts of the country, carrying death and destruction as they went. At Ballard's Valley they surrounded the overseer's house about four in the morning, in which, finding all the White servants in beds, they butchered every one of them in the most savage manner, and literally drank their blood mixed with rum. At Esher and other estates, they exhibited the same tragedy, and then set fire to the building and canes. In one morning they murdered between thirty and forty Whites and Mulattoes, not sparing even infants at the breast, before their progress was stopped. Tacky, the chief, was killed in the woods by one of the parties that went in pursuit of them; but some others of the ringleaders being taken, and a general inclination to revolt appearing among all the Koromantyn Negroes in the island, it was thought necessary to make a few terrible examples of some of the most guilty. Of three who were clearly proved to have been concerned in the murders committed at Ballard's Valley, one was condemned to be burnt, and the other two to be hung up alive in irons, and left to perish in that dreadful situation. The wretch that was burnt was made to sit on the ground, and his body being chained to an iron stake, the fire was applied to his feet. He uttered not a groan, and saw his legs reduced to ashes with the utmost firmness and composure; after which, one of his arms by some means getting loose, he snatched a brand from the fire that was consuming him, and flung it in the face of the executioner. The two that were hung up alive were indulged, at their own request, with a hearty meal immediately before they were suspended on the gibbet, which was erected in the parade of the town of Kingston. From that time, until they expired, they never uttered the least

of our West Indian possessions but Jamaica. While these settlements were held merely as a conquest—as a temporary not as a permanent possession—it seemed a less imperious duty to attempt ameliorations which would of course have expired with the authority which had established them. The Antidotist himself admits the inhumanity of the Dutch colonists, and seems to concur with us in protesting against committing to their discretion the lives and happiness of the slaves. A large body of these colonists have now become British subjects. But, by the mere transfer of allegiance, they have not probably acquired that tenderness of nature which he so lavishly ascribes to English West-Indians. If, while subject to Holland, the planters of Demarara and Berbice were really (to use the words which he quotes with approbation,) "the most inhuman masters," they, of course, continue inhuman still. If the law under which they formerly lived was ineffectual to restrain their admitted ferocity, they must remain as much exempt from controul now as ever, because we have not as yet established, in these new acquisitions, any one solitary regulation for the protection of the slaves. We exhibited, therefore, the proofs of their inhumanity, and called on Parliament to exert its authority in applying the remedy. Our premises are undisputed. The inference from them is most important, and seems to us to follow by the most simple process of reasoning. We pointed out crimes at once dreadful and remediable, and only asked that the remedy might not be withheld. To the Antidotist all this appears only "insidious and wilful obliquity."

But the first of our Sketches had yet another practical tendency. English judges have, for some years past, occupied the courts in which the jurists of Holland formerly presided. We acknowledge, and rejoice to acknowledge, that the chief judge lately appointed to Demarara, as well as his predecessor, is a man of rare accomplishments both moral and intellectual. But in the proceedings of Mr. John Clayton Jenyns, we saw what we conceived to be urgent cause for apprehension. The contrast between the former, and the recent, language of that gentleman is in itself only ludicrous. It was natural enough that he who thought the constitution of Great Britain an usurpation on the rights of man, should regard any restrictions on the pure unmitigated tyranny of a Dutch planter an intolerable hardship. But absurdity in men occupying high official stations is never innoxious. When we found the second fiscal, one of the criminal judges of Demarara, publicly

complaint, except only of cold in the night, but diverted themselves all day long in discourse with their countrymen, who were permitted, very improperly, to surround the gibbet. On the seventh day, a notion prevailed among the spectators that one of them wished to communicate an important secret to his master, my near relation; who being in St. Mary's parish, the commanding officer sent for me. I endeavoured, by means of an interpreter, to let him know that I was present, but I could not understand what he said in return. I remember, that both he and his fellow-sufferer laughed immoderately at something that occurred, I know not what. The next morning one of them silently expired, as did the other on the morning of the ninth day."

The above extract will serve as a reply to that part of the Antidote which would insinuate that the scene acted at Demarara had no parallel in the history of our English colonies. But this, it will be said, was in the year 1760. Yes; but happily there has been no insurrection in Jamaica since that period; and the discussions which began in England in the year 1787, have no less happily led to the abolition by law in that island of such tremendous inflictions. The recent history of Dominica and Barbadoes, however, will perhaps furnish materials for some farther remarks on this general subject.

avowing, in the heart of that colony, his opinion that the weakness of domestic authority needed the support of magisterial power; that the same hand which bore the scourge ought to be entrusted with the fasces; and that one human being ought to exercise over a number of his fellow-creatures, these tremendous powers, unthwarted and unopposed "by any intermediate authority;"—and when we further understood that the population to whom this teacher of the rights of man addressed his lessons, purchased them with avidity and extolled them with eagerness; we thought there was reasonable cause for apprehension. We remembered the practical commentaries on similar tenets which we had learnt from the Barbadian atrocities communicated by Lord Seaforth, and from the oppressions of Huggins and Hodge. We trembled for the fate of upwards of eighty thousand slaves, our fellow-subjects, contained in British Guiana; and we felt it to be our duty to expose so audacious an attack on the soundest maxims of civil government, and the first principles of justice and humanity. And though the writer of the Antidote cannot comprehend this; though he, in common with Mr. Jenyns, feels for the wounded honour of the planters who are injuriously supposed to need some controul in the use of their absolute power over other men; we cannot think that we rendered an ill service, either to the real honour and welfare of these planters, or to the interests of our country, in making a strenuous protest against doctrines so outrageously despotical.

We see, then, little occasion for the vehement exclamation of our opponent, "that the sins of the Dutch in Demarara are to be visited on the heads of Englishmen, who are eminently humane, both individually and as a nation!" Let the passage be quoted in which we have imputed to Englishmen those crimes which the Dutch have committed, or in which we have denied the general humanity of our countrymen. On the contrary, it is to the general and tried humanity of the people of England that we confidently make our appeal on this occasion, against that comparatively small number of persons, who would resist the attempt effectually to mitigate the sufferings of their unhappy bondmen.

The second general charge against us is, the suppression of passages in Dr. Pinckard's volumes which contradict the views we have given, from the same writer, of colonial slavery. To this we have already, perhaps, sufficiently replied in our last Sketch. We will, however, add a few words more.

From the publications of Dr. Pinckard our opponent has extracted two passages, in which that gentleman speaks in strong terms of the happy condition of West-Indian slaves. Of these, the first relates to the Negroes on the estate of the late Mr. Dougan, a British planter, then settled in Berbice. Now, in our Third Sketch (p. 27), we ourselves had previously quoted this very passage. We had there held up the very same picture to the admiration of our readers. But we added to the statement a fact which it does not suit our antagonist to notice. We observed, that on Mr. Dougan's death, his once happy Negroes, who had found in the paternal tenderness of that excellent man a refuge from the ordinary evils of colonial bondage, passed into other hands; and that they were then called to endure the common lot of their countrymen, embittered by recollections of past enjoyment, and deriving from the former lenity of their deceased master an acuter sense and a more exquisite capacity of suffering. It is one of the sad peculiarities of this system, that it can thus

eventually convert even the alleviations it affords into sources of aggravated distress.

On whom, then, rests the crime of unfair suppression;—on us, who cited the history, with this its melancholy supplement; or on him, who exhibits the first fair sketch of this picture, because it *appears* to confirm his own opinions, while he throws a veil over the concluding touches, which have obliterated its beauty?

It is with deliberation we say, that even the early part of this story *appears* only to confirm the doctrines of our Antidotist. He cannot revere more cordially than ourselves the conduct of Mr. Dougan. It is indeed hardly possible, for any man who has lived from infancy in this happy land, where the very prejudices and fashion, as well as principles, of society concur to enforce the social virtues; where not only religion and morals, but even ambition and vanity, are made subservient to the interests of humanity, to understand adequately the merit of such a character. He was untouched by the contamination which surrounded him. The healthful temper of his mind resisted the contagion of example. He was just and liberal, tender and condescending to his slaves, though he lived in the West-Indies.—Such, in substance and effect, is the eulogium of Dr. Pinckard. "Not satisfied with bestowing upon his Negroes mere food and raiment, Mr. Dougan establishes for them *a kind of right*." "He fosters them with a father's care." He not only "fed, clothed, and tenderly watched them in sickness," but "he assures to them certain property, endeavours to excite feelings of emulation among them, and to inspire them with a spirit of neatness and order not commonly known among Blacks." Since his departure from England, Dr. Pinckard had not experienced "such heartfelt pleasure as in witnessing" this scene. And why? Because it greeted his eyes like an Oasis in the desert. And yet let it be remembered, that even the *peculiar* comforts and the *singular* "kind of right," which called forth such a strain of feeling and animated eloquence from Dr. Pinckard, and on which the Antidotist dwells with such exultation, were held by the slaves on the short and precarious tenure of the life and property of their master. Not his death only, but even a legal execution against him, might tear these happy beings for ever from their homes, their parents, their children, their hopes, their property, and their country. In what other country in the world, inhabited by European proprietors, would this benevolent traveller have regarded such a state of things as this with the complacency it justly excited in him when found in the West Indies?

The other passage in favour of West-Indian humanity, which our opponent charges us with suppressing — an opinion expressed by Dr. Pinckard before he had been more than five weeks in the West Indies, and contradicted, as we have shewn, by his maturer judgment—we have already amply considered in our last Sketch. For our own parts we feel no difficulty in justifying the omission of the passage in question. We were not then engaged in a critical examination of Dr. Pinckard's opinions, or of his inferences from the facts he had witnessed. We had to do only with the facts themselves. We appealed to him as a witness, and not as a reasoner. With the most perfect reliance on his accuracy in the relation of such incidents as fell under his own observation, we might even be allowed to dispute the soundness of the opinions he deduced from them. Had we quoted the immature sentiments, which we are arraigned for suppressing, we should have been obliged to go into a detailed dis-

cussion, to shew their inconsistency not only with the general current of his facts, but with the opinions on the subject of West-Indian slavery which he afterwards expressed. Such a course would have served no other purpose than that of diverting the attention of our readers from the awful facts which we wished to submit to their consideration. And we do not marvel that our antagonist should be displeased that we did not thus weaken the force of those heart-rending statements.

It was not, then, from any desire to get rid of hostile testimony, but from the resolution to abstain from all irrelevant and unnecessary controversy, that we omitted to quote this part of Dr. Pinckard's book. But we have already shewn, in our last Sketch, what is the real bearing of Dr. Pinckard's testimony: we shall therefore dismiss the subject with a single remark, which the intelligent reader will perceive to carry with it a reply to many of the charges preferred against us by the author of the Antidote.

In order to establish the liability of any given system to abuse, and the consequent necessity for some remedial or preventive regulation, it is only requisite that that liability should be proved by unquestioned evidence; and it would be no answer to such evidence to say, that a vast variety of instances could be cited in which no abuse had taken place. If, for example, in the administration of the finances it could be shewn, even in a few cases, that gross peculations had occurred, it would not be deemed either a good set-off to such proof, or a valid reason for not instituting additional checks, that many more instances might be produced in which no delinquency could be imputed. Nor could it, with justice, be charged as unfairness in the person who, with a view to the application of an efficient remedy, should demonstrate those frauds in the case of ten individuals, that he had left unnoticed ten or twenty, or a hundred, instances in which no fraud could be proved, or in which the conduct had been exemplary and upright; nor would the necessity for a remedy, if a remedy could be applied, be thereby disproved. The application of this principle to the case in hand is sufficiently obvious. We accused the West-Indian system of great liability to abuse, and we produced proofs of that charge which are undeniable. It surely would be unjust to withhold the remedy, merely because various instances may be specified in which no abuse has existed; or to charge us with unfairness, though we have proved all we professed to prove, because we did not particularly specify those instances; and still more because we have not given any weight to vague and general opinions, in opposition to facts*.

It was not our intention to have said one word in reply to the abuse

* The Antidotist affects to be very severe, on what he calls a wilful falsehood, stated in the Sketches. We mention it rather to shew the desperate shifts to which he is driven, than from any apprehension that an explanation is necessary.—In our Sketch No. III. (p. 26), speaking of the outrage committed on the person of an unoffending Negro, by the order of the fiscal of Berbice, we remark; "And in what light does the result of Dr. Pinckard's humane interposition place the good faith and justice of the parties concerned, not merely of the unfeeling complainant, but of the judge commissioned by his Majesty," &c. The Antidotist asserts, that we knew that the judge was not commissioned by his Majesty, and therefore we stated what we knew to be false. We reply, that the expression, "commissioned by his Majesty," meant neither more nor less than acting under authority derived from his Majesty. Berbice was then a British possession, under his Majesty's allegiance; and the whole administration of its affairs therefore necessarily emanated from him, or from those to whom his authority was delegated.

heaped on the African Institution, on account of the statement which it published respecting an Aid-de-camp of Sir James Leith. On reconsidering the subject, however, we are induced to make a few brief remarks upon it. It is obvious, then, that if all the errors and crimes which the Antidotist has imputed to that body were fully proved, it would not invalidate either a single fact, or a tittle of the reasoning, contained in the West-Indian Sketches. The facts there detailed do not rest on the authority of that Society. The inferences founded on them would not be less legitimately deduced, if the Institution were suppressed to morrow as a public nuisance. Why, then, introduce into the Antidote charges which, whatever may be their justice, can never impugn one iota of the reasoning to which they are opposed? Simply because the author has discovered the weakness and the danger of his ground; because he is driven to substitute invective for argument; and because he thus hopes to enlist the bad passions of our nature in a cause to which no generous feeling can ever be allied. But we little understand the nature of Englishmen if such a course will succeed. They do not expect in any body of men an exemption from accidental errors, connected neither with wilful perversity nor with corrupt intention. Their humanity has not been acquired in the same school as that of the Antidotist.

The sum of his accusation is, that a narrative has been printed in one of the Reports of the African Institution, which contains an unfounded imputation on an Aid-de-camp of Sir James Leith. That the statement was untrue, is admitted. How, then, stands the fact? The Directors of the African Institution assert, that their information was derived from a correspondent of whose general accuracy they had numerous proofs. There was nothing, therefore, in the channel through which this intelligence reached them to excite distrust of its truth. Did the narrative, then, carry within itself its own refutation? Was it either impossible or improbable? Was it a thing incredible in itself, that in a West-Indian island a pregnant Negress should have been cruelly flogged, and that the prosecution of the criminal should have been unsuccessful? Now we put it to any candid man to say, whether any thing short of extreme scepticism would have excited a doubt as to the authenticity of such a narrative, proceeding from such a source. It was circumstantial: it afforded the means of its own refutation: it referred to legal proceedings, the existence of which, had they taken place, must have been matter of notoriety: it had all the apparent precision and distinctness of truth. Still it may be argued, that the fact itself was so revolting to humanity, that common charity should have taught the Institution to discredit so unnatural a tale. Happy that country where the force of this objection is strongly felt! But they who urge it should remember that Huggins and Hodge resided within the limits of the same government with this reported delinquent. They should remember, also, that down to the year 1798, when, in consequence of an address to that effect from the House of Commons to his Majesty, the Colonial Legislature of Antigua was induced to revise its Statute Book, the following enactment remained the law of that island:—"Whereas several cruel persons, to gratify their own humours, against the laws of God and humanity, frequently kill, dismember, and destroy their own and other persons' slaves, and have hitherto gone unpunished, because it is inconsistent with the constitution and government of this island, and would be too great a countenance and encouragement to slaves to resist White persons, to set slaves so far

upon equality with the free inhabitants as to try those who kill them for their lives; nor is it known or practised in any of the Caribbee Islands, that any free person killing a slave is liable for his life; but particular laws, of which we are not provided, are made in several of them for punishing the aforesaid crimes, and are found very effectual in deterring persons from such crimes: Be it therefore enacted, &c. That if any free person or persons whatsoever shall wilfully kill, or cause to be killed, any slave whatsoever, either belonging to himself or another, in any such manner as is not excusable by the laws of Great Britain, or allowed by the laws of the island, whether the same be by excessive punishment or otherwise, or shall geld or dismember any such slave, that then such person or persons shall be prosecuted, &c. and upon conviction of any such killing, the offender or offenders shall be fined each in any sum not under 100*l.* nor exceeding 300*l.* lawful money of this island, and be imprisoned until such fine be paid and all due fees, and find security for their good behaviour for one year: and in case of gelding or dismembering, and conviction thereof, the offender or offenders shall not be fined in any sum under 20*l.* nor above 100*l.* lawful money of this island, and be imprisoned in the common gaol until the same be paid, and find sureties for his good behaviour for a year; so as the prosecution be commenced in one year after the offence of killing, gelding, or maiming was committed, and not after; and shall likewise pay double damage or costs to the parties aggrieved," &c.—[See Laws of Antigua, published in London in 1805. Vol. ii. p. 286.]

And if the Directors, after having read this awful recital, had next inquired whether the legislature of Antigua, disgusted with the atrocious wickedness of their predecessors, had purged their Statute-Book for ever, not only from this but from all similar enactments, they would have found, by turning to Vol. i. p. 159, of the same work, that by a law still in force, "if any sturdy slave should imprudently strike or *oppose* any White person," he may be publicly whipped at the discretion of the court; and "if such White person be *any way hurt*, wounded, or disfigured by any slave's resistance, such offending slave or slaves shall have *their nose slit, or any member cut off, or be punished with death*," at the same discretion; "always excepting that such slave do not the same by his or her owner's or master's order."

And if they were to prosecute their researches farther, they might discover in the same work (Vol. ii. p. 36), that by the 37th clause of the Leeward Island Meliorating Act, it is enacted, "that any owner of any female slave within the Leeward Island who shall be *five months gone with child*, shall detain such slave on the estate to which she belongs, and employ her only in *light* work." During the first five months of her pregnancy, therefore, she may, by direct implication, be legally employed in heavy field-work, and may be urged to her labour, in common with all other field slaves, by the lash of the driver, like the beasts of the field.

Was it then, in itself, a strange or incredible thing, that a pregnant woman should have been cruelly flogged, in an island where, nineteen years ago, so execrable a statute as that we have first quoted was still in force; where the second act to which we have referred is law at this hour; and where even the Act of Amelioration, the subject of so many boasts, abandons, for the first five months of pregnancy, every female slave to a state of constant field labour conducted under the impulse of the lash?

Let, then, the Antidotist exult on this admitted mistake of the African Institution. But let him be

assured, that many such mistakes would not, in the estimate of any feeling mind, weigh as a feather in the balance, when contrasted with the abominations we have cited, even as existing law in the island of Antigua, and still more, with that which formed its law in the mature life time of the present generation of its legislators, and which was not repealed till the voice of the British Parliament and public called for amelioration.

We had related, in our Third Sketch (p. 26), a scene that Dr. Pinckard had witnessed in Barbadoes, and which he expressly denominates "a scene of cruelty which strongly exemplified the abject and wretched condition to which human beings are subjected in a state of slavery." Our Antidotist, as usual, undertakes its apology, and endeavours to obviate the effect of it by a reference to crimes committed in England. A future Sketch will more fully consider the principle of this defence. In the mean time, we shall content ourselves with furnishing some fresh employment to the dialectic skill of this writer.

Eight or nine years after Dr. Pinckard witnessed the transaction which he regarded with so much horror*, but which our apologist considers as so light and venial; on the 13th of November, 1804, Lord Seaforth, the Governor of Barbadoes thus addresses Earl Camden:—

"I inclose four papers containing, from different quarters, reports on the horrid murders I mentioned in some former letters. *They are selected from a great number*, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts, though several of the letters are very concise and defective. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble than to get at the bottom of these businesses, *so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people:*" (observe, not of one or two, or of a few individuals, but of THE PEOPLE.)

In a subsequent letter, dated 7th January, 1805, his Lordship writes—"I inclose the Attorney-General's letter to me on the subject of the Negroes *so most wantonly murdered*. I am sorry to say, SEVERAL OTHER INSTANCES OF THE SAME BARBARITY have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as *I only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general.*"

The letters to which Lord Seaforth refers, and which accompany the above extracts, are from four of the most respectable individuals in the island of Barbadoes, viz. Mr. Ince, the President of the Council; Mr. Coulthurst, the Advocate-General; Mr. Beccles, the Attorney-General; and the Rev. Mr. Pilgrim. We refer our readers, for a full view of these horrid but instructive transactions, to the West-Indian Papers, printed by order of the House of Commons, on the 25th February, 1805. We have room, at present, only for an abridged view of one of the cases, which, however, does not exceed the others in atrocity.

A Mr. Colbeck, who lived overseer on Cabbage-tree plantation, in St. Lucy's parish, "*had bought a new Negro Boy out of the yard,*" (meaning the slave yard where Negroes were exposed to sale, in the same manner as the cattle and sheep in Smithfield market), and carried him home. Conceiving a liking to the boy, he took him into the house and made him wait at table. Mr. Crone, the overseer of Rowe's estate, which is near to Cabbage-tree plantation, was in the habit of visiting Mr. Colbeck, *had noticed the boy and knew him well.* A fire hap-

* "While the power of memory remains to me," observes this benevolent traveller, "I can never, *never* forget the indignant but hopeless expression of injury which overspread the features of this poor slave as he retired! He felt aggrieved, and was conscious that *he had no remedy—no appeal!*"

pening one night in the neighbourhood, Colbeck went to give his assistance, and the boy followed him. Colbeck, on his return home, missed the boy, who had lost his way; and as he did not make his appearance the next day, he sent round to his neighbours, and *particularly to* Crone, informing them, that his African lad had strayed, that *he could not speak a word of English*, and possibly he might be found breaking some sugar canes, or taking something else for his support: in which case he requested they would not injure him, but send him home, and he would pay any damage the boy might have committed. After a lapse of two or three days, the poor creature was discovered in a gully (or deep water course) near to Rowe's estate; and a number of Negroes were soon assembled about the place. The boy naturally terrified with the threats, the noise, and the appearance of so many people, retreated into a hole in a rock, having a stone in his hand; for the purpose, probably, of defence. By this time Crone, and some other White persons, had come up. *By their orders a fire was put to the hole where the boy lay, who, when he began to be scorched, ran from his hiding place into a pool of water which was near.* Some of the Negroes pursued him into the pool; and the boy, it is said, threw the stone which he held in his hand at one of them. On this, two of the White men, Crone and Hollingsworth, *fired at the boy several times with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition; for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot that it was like a cullender.* The White savages (this is the language of Mr. Attorney-General Beccles) ordered the Negroes to dig a grave. *Whilst they were digging it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him: but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it and covered over*, and, as is believed, WHILE YET ALIVE. Colbeck, the owner of the boy, hearing that a Negro had been killed, went to Crone to inquire into the truth of the report. Crone *told him, that a Negro had been killed and buried*, but *assured him it was not his, for he knew him well*, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. On this, Colbeck *went away* SATISFIED! Receiving, however, further information, he returned and had the grave opened, when he found the murdered Negro to be his own. Colbeck brought his action of damages in the courts of the island against Crone and Hollingsworth. The cause was ready to be tried, and the Court had met for the purpose, when they thought proper to pay double the value of the boy, and 25*l.* for the use of the island, (being 5*l.* less than the penalty fixed by law, of 15*l.* currency each,) rather than suffer the business to go to a hearing. "This, I am truly sorry to say," observes the Advocate-General, "*was the only punishment which could be inflicted for so barbarous and atrocious a crime.*"

This horrid recital seems to require little comment. One circumstance of it, however, may not strike the minds of some readers with its due force, although it appears to be the most affecting part of the whole case. Colbeck, it is said, on hearing that it was not his slave who had been murdered, WENT AWAY SATISFIED! The preceding part of the narrative had prepared us to expect in Colbeck some approximation to European feeling. But what is the fact? On being coolly told that a Negro had been killed and buried—told so by his neighbour, the murderer—is he shocked? Does he express any horror or indignation on the occasion? No! he goes away *satisfied!!* Let the reader give its due weight

to this one circumstance, and he will be convinced that a state of society must exist in the West Indies of which, as an inhabitant of this happy island, he can scarcely form any adequate conception. Suppose, instead of a Negro slave, that it had been a horse which had been thus killed. Colbeck, had *his* horse happened to be missing at the time, would have pursued exactly the same steps, and would have been affected in the same way as in the present instance. The moral perceptions and feelings which prevail in that quarter of the world, it will be perceived, are different from those on this side of the Atlantic. Even Mr. Colbeck, comparatively a man of humanity, hearing that a fellow-creature has been cruelly and wantonly murdered, *goes away satisfied*, because he himself has sustained no loss by the murder! There are, doubtless, many bright exceptions to this remark in the West Indies, many men of enlightened minds, who would feel as deeply the horror of such a transaction as any individual in this country. But do we act unjustly when we unite with Lord Seaforth, himself also a planter, in applying the remark *to the people*—to the bulk of the community, whose prejudices are stated by his Lordship to have been so *horribly absurd* as not merely to withstand any remedy, but even to prevent inquiry; "for nothing," he says, "has given me more trouble than to get at the bottom of these businesses, *so horribly absurd are the prejudices of* THE PEOPLE!"

Our next Sketch will contain the sequel of our observations on the "Antidote" furnished by this apologist for West-Indian slavery.

Ellerton and Henderson, Printers,
Johnson's Court, London.

# West-Indian Sketches.

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

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## No VIII.

## FURTHER REMARKS

ON THE

## ANTIDOTE TO THE WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES,

BEING A

RE-CONSIDERATION OF THE CASE OF MR. HODGE

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LONDON:

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1817.

# WEST-INDIAN SKETCHES, &c.

In the Fourth Number of these Sketches will be found a short but awful summary of the case of the notorious Arthur Hodge. Extreme, and certainly not unnatural, is the resentment with which the publication of this sad tale seems to have inflamed the writer of the Antidote. It is "an arrogant and daring calumny," "a disgusting falsehood," "an atrocious libel." Surely, exclaims this apologist, "his ashes should rest in peace." "It little accords with true Christian charity, to pursue the memory of the dead, even beyond the grave, with such unrelenting bitterness."

We request our readers once more to peruse the history of this man's crimes. They will find that only eight years before his trial he was the owner of nearly 140 Negroes, of whom only 35 then remained;—that in the deliberate judgment of Mr. Horsford, the Solicitor-General of the Leeward Islands, who appeals to the personal knowledge of the jury in confirmation of his statement, one hundred of these unhappy beings had, in that short interval, fallen under the merciless tyranny of this monster;—that, besides the more usual modes of plantation punishments, carried, indeed, to unusual excess, it was his habit to plunge the children of his gang, of nine years of age, under water till they were stifled, and, before life was extinguished, to order them to be suspended to a tree by their hands, and cartwhipped *at close quarters*, as he called it;—that some were burnt with hot irons; that he poured boiling water down the throats of others; that, in one case, he dipped a child in a copper of boiling liquor;—that his crimes, in short, were such, both in their frequency and atrocity, as not to be mentioned without horror. Our apologist, however, is anxious that those crimes should be forgotten, and that the memory of Arthur Hodge should be rescued from infamy. But is not the dread of this unceasing posthumous infamy, if it be not a guard of virtue, at least to be numbered among the preservatives from crime? The record of such awful transactions, although the most painful, is, in this view, not the least important passage in the general history of human society. This is our *general* apology for having dwelt upon a picture so disgusting.—Our *particular* excuse is, that the story is pregnant with evidence of the degradation and wretchedness of West-Indian bondsmen. Not that we imagine, or would insinuate, that such beings as Hodge are often to be found even in that land of slavery; or that we do not readily acknowledge that our colonies contain many proprietors whose humanity is at once unquestionable and admirable, and who, in circumstances peculiarly unfavourable, preserve uninjured the tenderness and benevolence of their hearts. All this we freely admit, while we, nevertheless, maintain our general position. And certainly the history of Hodge's crimes seems to us to establish, beyond dispute, that the perpetration of such enormities without detection or punishment is easily practicable; that, in the recesses of a plantation, where no free man but the proprietor himself need be admitted, it is possible to rival, with perfect impunity, the crimes of a Caligula or a Nero; that in such a situation self-interest itself may be overborne by other passions; and that, even when Providence at last exposes to the sight and execration of the world these

hidden atrocities, the criminal may find among his fellow-colonists a jury to commend him to mercy, and a population disposed to rescue him from punishment.

These conclusions, however, the Antidotist denies. The murderers of the families of Marr and Williamson, he says, are still undiscovered: the impunity of Hodge is a parallel case with the long security of these miscreants; and the laws of England are no more culpable for the one than the laws of Tortola for the other.—What must that system be, which can drive its advocates to such an apology as this! To make the parallel complete, our apologist should have shewn that these families were murdered in the light of day, and in the sight and hearing of scores of men, women, and children, by a person in high station, who was known to every member of the community; that scarcely any man in Great Britain entertained a doubt of his guilt; that his hands had for several years been bathed in blood; that during those years no judicial inquiry had been made into the facts of the case, no attempt made to apprehend the criminal, no reward offered for the discovery of his crimes; that the murderer walked erect in society as a man of honour and a duellist, no man declining his company, and even ladies visiting him at his house, the scene of his enormities; that he was a member of his Majesty's Privy Council, a Legislator, and a Judge. Let all this be shewn, and we will admit the justice of the parallel. But if the fact be—as who will dispute it?—that the wretched murderer in England caused, on the first mention of his much lighter guilt, a cry of horror from every tongue; that the meanest labourer in this land would have shrunk from his touch as a contamination; that ingenuity was fatigued in contriving plans for his detection; and that popular rage could hardly have been restrained from destroying any one on whom suspicion appeared to rest:—if such was the effect of these murders in England; and if crimes of a still deeper dye, when committed against Negroes, excited, in Tortola, for several years after they were committed, not one expression of *public* feeling, not one *known* effort for detection, ought not this writer to be ashamed of his comparison? Will he deny that the crimes of Hodge were well known in Tortola for several years before his trial was thought of? Hear the Antidotist's own witness, Mr. Horsford:—"The general character of the prisoner at the bar," says that gentleman, addressing the jury, "is well known to you all. Mr. Ross and Mr. Green inform you that eight years ago he was owner of near 140 Negroes. How many, gentlemen, *to your own knowledge*, has he now upon his estate? That, *coming within your own knowledge*, is good proof. I am informed that there are not more than 35 remaining." (Trial, p. 138.) The finger of God, says the same advocate, has pointed out the son of this lady to be the avenger of her wrongs. "He is his first accuser. *That which was long known, but remained unnoticed and uninvestigated* for want of proof to bring conviction home to the murderer's door," &c. (p. 137.)—*Long known*, and yet for want of proof *uninvestigated!!* — Hear again the Counsel for the prisoner;—"*Gentlemen who visited him must see Negroes in that state on an estate:* you cannot therefore believe the witnesses." (p. 89.) And yet the jury did believe these witnesses, and the uncontradicted testimony of his own advocate remains, that *gentlemen* visited this man at the scene of those horrors. But, stronger still to the same purpose, listen to the statement of the second Counsel for the prosecution, already quoted by us in the Fourth Sketch, p. 38: — "Why the witnesses, whom you will soon hear, did not earlier publish his guilt, you will

learn from themselves. Why he was not sooner arrested and brought to trial, you may as well individually ask yourselves as any other person; *for you must each, as well as the rest of the community, have learned from rumour the catalogue of his crimes. But what is every body's business, usually is performed by nobody;* and not knowing where testimony might be procured, no individual would risk the chance of rendering himself the victim of Mr. Hodge's resentment and vengeance, by making accusations he might not be able to substantiate as true: for you well know, gentlemen, that only on the evidence of *free persons* can a free person be convicted. *Policy* has decreed that Slaves shall only be permitted to testify against their fellow-slaves, and not against *free persons, in any case whatsoever. Were it otherwise, I would here introduce a number of sable wretches, bearing the ostensible marks of the prisoner's cruelty, whose very appearance would make humanity shudder, and whose tales of woe would cause every nerve within you to vibrate with agony.*" Trial, p. 54.

Once more: look at the testimony of the first witness, Robert Green. He says, " Mr. M'Keough" (one of the witnesses for the Crown) " has been entertained at my house: he still eats and drinks with me, as does Perreene Georges" (another witness for the Crown), " both at my own charge." He was then asked, " Why were they placed with you?" His reply is; " Because they both told the magistrates, they wished to be put under my protection, as *they were afraid of being assassinated, not by Mr. Hodge, but by his friends.*" Trial, p. 16.

The last witness to whom we appeal is Mrs. Ann Arrendell, a lady, examined for the prisoner. " Were you," she is asked, " a visitor at Mr. Hodge's?" " I was." " What is your opinion of Mr. Hodge?" " I can't say any thing but *what is pleasant* of Mr. Hodge, in justice to him, according to my conscience." pp. 103, 105.

In short, it is plain that this man, believed to be the murderer of many of his slaves, walked at large in Tortola, his crimes " uninvestigated," visited by " gentlemen," and by ladies too—a member of council, a legislator, and a judge! And this is the state of society for which the Antidotist would find a parallel in English laws and manners!

He urges, however, that the Sketches suppressed many circumstances tending to extenuate the conduct of this West-Indian society. In proof of this, he quotes, from the very passage in the speech of Mr. Lisle to which we have just referred, a declaration " that the magistrates had been indefatigable in bringing the prisoner to trial;" and again, in Italics, that " *nobody knew where testimony might be procured of his guilt.*"

Now, first, let this railer feel the charge of suppression retorted on himself. If he really wished fairly to exhibit Mr. Lisle's testimony as to the activity of the police, why suppress those emphatic words which immediately precede his quotation? " Why Mr. Hodge was not sooner arrested and brought to trial, you may as well individually ask yourselves as any other person; for you must each, as well as every other person in the community, have learnt from rumour the catalogue of his crimes." " But what is every body's business is usually performed by nobody."

Such, then, when fairly given, is the testimony of Mr. Lisle on this subject. Whether our opponent will gain any thing by the production of it, our readers shall judge.

The fact to be explained is this. At a plantation, situate within sight of the very seat of justice of Tortola, Hodge pursued his unparalleled atrocities for four long years; and this conduct, though long " known, remained unnoticed and uninvestigated." This, we repeat, is the fact, resting on the statement of the gentlemen to whose testi-

mony our opponent himself appeals. Mr. Lisle seems to have felt that this fact might lead to inferences unfavourable to the humanity of the White population. He therefore advances two apologies, of which the Antidotist, it seems, is desirous to have the benefit.

First, then, Mr. Lisle states, that no one knew where evidence was to be procured of Hodge's guilt. Compare with this Mr. Horsford's language: "I could here introduce a number of sable wretches, bearing the ostensible marks of the prisoner's cruelty, whose very appearance would make humanity shudder, and cause every nerve within you to vibrate with agony!" And yet, say these learned gentlemen, no one knew where testimony might be procured of his guilt. A valuable proof, doubtless, of the humanity of the West-Indian code, and of the utility of the rule which rejects the evidence of slaves! Now, if Hodge had resided in England, and had been the proprietor of a herd of cattle, whose carcasses were mangled by every description of torture the most atrocious and wanton, and if there had been notorious circumstances sufficient to establish his guilt, we conceive there is no doubt, that on such circumstantial evidence, he might have been convicted of a very high misdemeanor. As little doubtful do we consider it to be, that although direct evidence against Hodge might have been wanting, there was circumstantial proof abundantly sufficient to convict him of the crime of wilful murder. Who but himself could, upon his own estate, have been the perpetrator of such crimes?

But this is not the only answer to Mr. Lisle's first apology. Why were not M'Keough, and Georges, and Skelton, and Green, by whose evidence the prisoner was at last convicted, much sooner examined on the subject? Why did not the gentlemen who, we are told, visited at the estate, testify against the crimes of which the traces must have met their eyes? We trust, that in his next pamphlet, our opponent will answer these questions.

But, secondly, Mr. Lisle asserts, that the magistrates were indefatigable. In the same breath, we are told, that the magistrates were "indefatigable" and that the detection of these crimes was considered as nobody's business. This is the important testimony we are accused of having suppressed. We did not choose, it seems, to let it be known that Mr. Lisle had, without comment, reproof, or interruption, asserted, in the presence and hearing of the magistracy of the country, that "the whole community had learnt, from rumour, the catalogue of Hodge's crimes, but that what is every body's business is usually performed by nobody." Truly, we think, our opponent should not be displeased with such "suppressions" as these.

But still Mr. Lisle asserts, that the magistrates have been indefatigable. We do not take upon ourselves at present to dispute, or even to consider, the truth of his assertion; but this much we hold to be indisputable, that no evidence of the reality of their labours has yet been produced. "*Have been* indefatigable!" From what time? Does Mr. Lisle assert that their exertions were coeval with the first suspicion of the crime? Does he allege that any attempt was made to interrupt the progress of this tragedy? This is the point to be proved. How the fact may really be, we are not now called upon to state. We simply assert, that if the printed copy of the trial to which our opponent refers, is accurate, Mr. Lisle does not prove the case in support of which the Antidotist cites his testimony. On the contrary, we think this gentleman's evidence, as there given, so decidedly hostile to the character of the magistrates, that if they were really innocent (which we do not mean either to assert or deny)

of the most scandalous neglect of duty, we can only express our astonishment that they could permit this gentleman to make such declarations. He tells them to their face, that the prevention of these crimes had been considered as nobody's business, and strangely supposes that he can atone for this insult, by simply asserting without dates or circumstances, that they *had been* indefatigable. He certainly could not mean to speak of that period during which he tells them the whole matter was considered to be nobody's business.

But the *legislature*, it seems, was struck with horror, and paid 600*l.* in support of the prosecution, besides taking other means to bring Mr. Hodge to justice. We wish they had also disclaimed all past knowledge or suspicion of the crimes of their colleague, and thus purged themselves from any share in that guilty indifference to his offences, with which the advocates for the Crown appear, by a direct inference, to have charged the population at large. The complimentary language of a Governor in a Public Order, or of a Minister of State in an Official Letter, are not a sufficient substitute for such a disavowal.

But we are charged with falsely asserting that the militia were called out to prevent the *White mob* from rescuing Mr. Hodge from his fate. And how is this charge supported? By asserting, that this very White mob themselves constitute the militia; by quoting Governor Elliot's declaration that he was in consultation with the Council how to act in case of emergency; by repeating that gentleman's testimony to their good conduct, and Lord Liverpool's approbation of the assistance given him by the legislature; and, lastly, by asserting that the militia were called out *in order to keep the Black population in awe.*

To all this, the reply is easy. Even if it were true that the White mob constituted the whole of the military force of the island, we should say, that to embody them as a militia, and proclaim martial law, would have been the best mode of securing tranquillity, and preventing that interference with "the due execution of the fatal sentence of the law," which Governor Elliot apprehended. Martial law armed him with large and summary powers. It placed under the immediate eye of the Government, and under the restraints of military discipline, the very men whose insubordination, in other circumstances, it might be impossible with equal facility to prevent or to punish. The expediency, therefore, of this measure, even if it were true that the White population formed the whole of the militia, would be unquestionable.

But it is not the fact that the militia consisted only of Whites. In Tortola, as in every other West-Indian island, a large proportion of the militia is composed of the *free* People of Colour, both Blacks and Mulattoes; on whom, doubtless, during the existence of martial law, and the consequent suspension of the ordinary forms of civil process, the Governor might confidently rely, on such an occasion, for the execution of his orders, and the maintenance of his authority. At least, they would prove a very formidable check on any tendency to insubordination which might have manifested itself among the White part of the embodied soldiery.

But the Minister of Great Britain joins with the Representative of his Majesty on the spot, in approving the activity of those magistrates. He did so, and the ground of *applause* was, that they had concurred to enforce the law against so heinous a criminal! The sentiments of Governor Elliot, however, are elsewhere clearly expressed respecting the White population of the islands comprised within the limits of his government. In a letter to Lord Liverpool, dated Antigua, 21st Nov. 1810, and printed by order of the House of Commons

on the 31st May, 1811, he writes as follows:—

"I do not believe the defects complained of," namely, in the state of the colonial governments, "are to be ascribed principally to the remissness of their leading members. The root of the evil lies deeper. The fact is, the governments of the smaller islands were formed in times when many of the proprietors lived upon their estates, and the White population was, in some instances, perhaps ten times as numerous as it now is. Of the few White inhabitants who remain, managers, overseers, self-created lawyers, self-educated physicians, and adventurous merchants, with little real capital and scanty credit, compose the greatest part. The acquirements of education, among many of this description of persons, are very unequal to the task of taking a share in the governments. The prevalence of principle, either moral or religious, is also, I fear, not to be fairly calculated from the repetition of the hackneyed expressions of which an ostentatious use is frequently made in addresses, and on all occasions meant to meet the public eye at home.

"To collect from such a state of society, men fit to be legislators, judges, or jurymen, is perfectly impracticable. Individual interest, personal influence, animosity of party feuds, weigh down the scale of justice, and divert the course of legislative authority into acts of arbitrary and unjustifiable power, cloaked under the semblance and dignified with the name of constitutional acts. How such defects are to be remedied, is a question which requires much minute investigation and serious and dispassionate consideration."

Now it is for agreeing with Mr. Elliot, as to the necessity of some remedial measures to obviate these defects, that we are reviled by our Antidotist.

But this writer tells us, and with an air of seriousness, that the danger apprehended by Governor Elliot was from the Black population! That is to say, they whose wrongs were to be avenged, whose persons were to acquire from the execution of this righteous sentence a new defence from the most cruel injuries: they it was, we are required to believe, who, at the risk of the severest punishment, were to bear Mr. Hodge from his fate, and to dash from his lips by violence the bitter cup he was sentenced to taste. This Antidotist is but a shallow student of human nature. He ought to have employed his dialectic skill in reconciling his extraordinary view of this case with the distinct assertion of Governor Elliot, that the measures to which he was obliged to have recourse for preserving the public tranquillity, and ensuring the due execution of Hodge's sentence, were rendered necessary by the state of "*party animosity*" in the island. Is it possible to conceive a case of more gross and wilful misrepresentation than is here attempted?

Let, then, this writer rail on, and call in aid his colleagues to supply him with terms to blacken the character and defame the motives of his opponents. We hesitate not to assert again, that this story of Hodge's murders carries with it a whole body of argument, destructive of all the sophisms and falsehoods of this apologist, and for which he will never find an effectual "antidote." It not only convicts the wretched being of the crimes for which he died, but demonstrates the cold insensibility to the sufferings of Negroes, the difficulty of punishing crimes against them, the dreadful powers of masters, the strength of the temptations to abuse those powers, and the helpless, degraded, despised condition of slaves, *even* in English West-Indian settlements, with a force which no subtlety can evade, and no violence subdue.

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